EFL/ESP Teacher Development and Classroom Innovation through Teacher-Initiated Action Research

Two Volumes

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by

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Acknowledgments

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EFL/ESP Teacher Development and Classroom Innovation through Teacher-Initiated Action Research

Abstract

This study is an investigation of the potential of teacher-initiated action research for EFL/ESP teacher development and classroom innovation. The Collaborative Academic Writing Research Project (CAWRP), on which it is based, was carried out at the ESP Centre, Damascus University, in 1996-1997. It was in two phases, Baseline and Main. The researcher, a teacher in the context, assumed a participatory and facilitating role. The pedagogic problem was the teaching of research paper writing to postgraduate students. The CAWRP was proposed to ease this problem and introduce classroom innovation through teacher-initiated action research, the long-term aim of which was continuous professional development. The baseline research aimed at articulating a picture of teacher and context needs and assessing project viability. The proposal was refined in the light of the findings, and a programme of teacher development activities was agreed with the participants. This was implemented in the Main Phase, which had three stages: Orientation, Research and Reporting, and Summative Evaluation and Follow-up. The role of the researcher was to facilitate the teachers to self-direct their professional learning and introduce needed pedagogic innovations.

The thesis is in eight chapters and 32 appendices. Chapter One sets the scene and introduces the study. Chapter Two focuses on the baseline investigation: its methodology, findings, and their implications for the Main Phase study. Chapter Three is a review of the relevant literature in the fields of teacher development and classroom innovation. Chapter Four focuses on project design and methodology and gives more details on the principles, values, strategies, and procedures that guided project implementation and how they worked out in action. Chapter Five reports the findings, focusing on the contribution of the Orientation Stage activities to the development of the teacher group as a whole (a total of 20 out of 23 Centre teachers). Its main sources of data are recordings, feedback questionnaires, and participant observation. Chapter Six focuses on the teachers who carried out action research and reported on it (8 out of the 20 Orientation Stage participants). It presents two case studies of full participants, starting with their entry points and showing how they developed in the Research and Reporting Stage. One case exemplifies the experienced teachers and those who did research individually, and the other the novices and those who worked in collaboration. Chapter Seven reports on the participants' summative evaluation of the project and the effect of this evaluation on project continuity. Chapter Eight summarises the main findings and evaluates them with reference to the literature, on the one hand, and design principles and methodology, on the other. In this chapter, I have looked critically at the lessons learnt from the study, discussed its significance and limitations, and put forward some recommendations. The appendices include some of the materials and documentary evidence used in the research.

Abbreviations

APP	Academic Project Paper
AR	Action Research
ARW	Action Research Workshop
BANA	Britain, Australia, North America (Holliday 1994)
CARN	Collaborative Action Research Network
CAWRP	Collaborative Academic Writing Research Project
CELTE	Centre for English Language Teacher Education
COP	Collaborative oral presentation
CPD	Continuous professional development
DC	Discussion circle
EAP	English for Academic Purposes
EGP	English for General Purposes
ESP	English for Specific Purposes
ESPC	English for Specific Purposes Centre
ET	Experienced teacher
Hum	Humanities
IATEFL	International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
INSET	Inservice Training
IOP	Individual oral presentation
KELT	Key English Language Teacher (UK)
LIPT	Language Inservice Programme for Teachers (Australia)
LSP	Language for specific purposes
MCP	Med-Campus Project
Med	Medical
MEP	Material Evaluation Project
NT	Novice teacher

NWP	National Writing Project (USA)
ODA	Overseas Development Adminstration
OP	Oral presentation
Prof	Professor
SLA	Second language acquisition
Sci-Tec	Science and technology
TA	Teacher assistant
TAR	Teacher-initiated action research
TD	Teacher development
TESEP	*Te*rtiary, *se*condary, *p*rimary (Holliday 1994)
TESOL	Teaching of English to Speakers of Other Languages
USIS	United States Information Service

CHAPTER ONE

Setting the Scene

1.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the thesis: its area of enquiry; its context; its motivation; its aims and research questions; and, finally, its map, the overall structure. At the outset, however, it is important to remind the reader that the study was carried out in two main phases: Baseline and Main, each of which had a follow-up stage. Much of the information on which this chapter is based, though mainly factual in orientation, derives from the baseline investigation to which Chapter Two is devoted (see Appendix 1.1).

1.2 Area of Enquiry and Contribution

This study is a contribution to the field of language teacher development (TD) with particular reference to EFL/ESP teachers. EFL here is associated with contexts where English is taught outside the native context, what Holliday (1994: 12) terms TESEP (*te*rtiary, *se*condary, and *p*rimary). In such contexts, English is generally a compulsory school and college subject, the teaching of which is state-controlled and non-commercial in orientation. This is unlike the general situation in BANA (Britain, Australia, and North America) or ESL contexts, where the teaching of English to non-natives is optional and commercial in orientation (*ibid.*). EFL contexts, in this sense, constitute the majority of English language education scenarios in the world (Holliday 1994; see also Enyedi and Medgyes 1998).

The definition of TD adopted in this thesis is Lange's. It is a "process of continual intellectual, experiential and attitudinal growth some of which is generated in pre-professional and professional inservice programs" (1990: 250). In this sense, TD is viewed as long-term personal and professional growth of teachers, often

termed "education" or "continuous professional development" (CPD) (see Craft 1996; Glover and Law 1996), an umbrella term inclusive of the traditionally termed "training". Widdowson (1993: 268) defines "training" as "the process of preparing people to cope with problems which can be more or less predicted in advance" (see also K. Richards 1989). He sees teacher education "as a matter of providing teachers with the attitudes and abilities required for them to be involved in action research" (*ibid.*: 267). This view is the one adopted in this thesis.

The main aim of this study is to explore the potential of teacher-initiated action research (TAR) for TD and the interrelationship between TD and classroom innovation. The term "teacher-initiated" means that teacher action is not imposed but can be extrinsically motivated.

The thesis contributes to a field where research is needed. According to K. Richards (1997a: 115), "what is missing from discussions of ESP (and EFL) teacher education, and strikingly so, is any reference to the person who is responsible for the teaching" (see also Medgyes 1994: 22; K. Richards 1997b; Bernhardt and Hammadou 1987). Also, Fullan and Hargreaves (1992a: 26) point out that "Many staff development initiatives take the form of something that is done *to* teachers rather than *with* them, still less *by* them" (italics in the original). They point out four elements that have been overlooked in top-down approaches to TD:

> 1. The teacher's *purpose*
> 2. The teacher as a *person*
> 3. The real world *context* in which teachers work
> 4. The *culture* of teaching; the working relationship that teachers have with their colleagues ... (1992a: 27).

They also note that "most approaches still fail to value (and consequently fail to involve the veteran teacher" (1992b: 5).

The Collaborative Academic Writing Research Project (CAWRP), on which this study is based, is an attempt to contribute to filling in these gaps. It is, therefore, teacher-centred, teacher-initiated, collaborative in the sense of working together (novices, experienced, and administration) for a common purpose, participatory (the researcher is a learner and facilitator), teacher self-directed, and teacher-evaluated.

1.3 Context of the Study: Macro

The research was carried out at the ESP Centre (ESPC), Damascus University, Syria, in 1996 and 1997. This section is about the factors external but influential upon the ESPC. There are two sub-sections. The first focuses on English in higher education and the second on the teachers of English at this level and their general situation.

1.3.1 English in Higher Education

Currently, there are four universities in Syria: Damascus, Aleppo, Tishreen and Al-Ba'ath, the largest being Damascus. It has 16 faculties, about 95, 000 students, and 2100 staff, over 50% of the gross total of students and staff in the four universities (see Damascus University 1994 and Ministry of Higher Education 1995 and 1996). Over 75% of the University's students learn or have learnt English as a compulsory school and university subject. Because of this huge number, resources and facilities remain insufficient. In many faculties classes are crowded (Holliday and Cooke 1982; Abunna'aj 1992; Dalbani 1992).

English has a high status at the university level (and school as well). Number of hours varies from faculty to faculty and from year to year. The range is 2-6 per week, being highest in the medical sciences and lowest in some intermediate institutes. All applicants who are offered places for higher studies (Master or PhD) must follow an ESP course and pass it before they are formally accepted. Curricula at the undergraduate level vary between literary and scientific and first and final years. Generally, they are general and broad-angled in the first two years and field-specific in the final two years. The focus of undergraduate courses is mainly reading, and little attention is given to the other skills. Imported textbooks (currently, *Headway* series or *Reading and Thinking in English*) or locally compiled materials are used. Teaching methodology is supposed to be communicative (see Holliday and Cooke 1982), but problems have been reported because of context variables (Malkani 1992).

1.3.2 The Teachers and Their Situation

The focus in this section is on the teachers of English in higher education, their qualification, recruitment and inservice education and assessment policy, and, finally, their social and economic situation.

Syria has adopted a policy different from those in many other Arab countries in relying totally on local staff (see M. Daoud 1996 and Al-Halwachi 1990). Almost all English teachers have studied English language and literature in Syria and are graduates of local English departments. The majority are part-time lecturers, with a BA qualification. Some are seconded from the Ministry of Education. Others are English Department teacher assistants, who teach at different faculties while waiting to be sent abroad for higher studies. A few others are subject specialists, who know English because they have specialised in English speaking countries.

The English Department Head is currently responsible for teacher recruitment, selection, and allocation at the undergraduate level. Teachers who apply for teaching posts should fulfill some requirements. They should possess at least a BA qualification with a "good" overall average (60%) and/or five years experience in teaching English. Teacher appraisal is non-existent in the entire higher education system at present. The ESP Centre is responsible for inservice training, which is limited to an annual 3-5 day seminar given by British or American experts in coordination with the ESP Centre and the University. All the teachers are formally invited (not obliged) to attend, but only a few respond, presumably for lack of time and incentives. Also, there seems to be little cooperation and coordination between the English Department and the ESP Centre to support inservice training. Overall, teacher learning opportunities in higher education are marginal, both at the practical level (inservice training) and academic level (accreditation). There is no certificated study in ELT at university level (but see 1.4.6.4). The teachers' social and economic situation has a role to play in hindering their growth and increasing their isolation. Rhetorically, teachers are "generation builders" and "architects of the future". They have a "Teacher's Day",

which is a public holiday for all teachers. In practice, however, teachers are overworked and underpaid. As their salaries have not kept up with inflation, many are experiencing real hardships and suffering from low morale. To make ends meet, a great many teachers find themselves forced to work overtime and/or do jobs other than teaching. This phenomenon is mostly found among male teachers in a culture where males are supposed to be the "bread winners". In a recent symposium on foreign language teaching in Syria (1996), raising salaries was one of the key recommendations. In a serio-comic skit on Teacher's Day in 1997, Walid Ma'mari, the *Tishreen Newspaper* columnist (1997: 5), drew attention to the fact that 30 years before, a teacher's salary could buy 100 grams of gold, but at present a retired teacher gets the equivalent of "6 grams of gold". Addressing teachers, he concluded: "In spite of all this, we say 'Happy Teacher's Day' to you, though you are unfairly treated!".

Before I turn to the immediate context of this study, the ESP Centre, I should point out that at present there are two other institutions providing services similar to those of the ESPC. One, at the University of Aleppo, is called the "English Language Advisory Centre". The other, at Tishreen University, Latakia, is part of the "Institute of Languages".

1.4 Context of the Study: Micro

This section focuses on the ESP Centre. Since this study is qualitative in orientation and is concerned with TD and classroom innovation, there is a need to provide the reader with a "smell and feel" of the place and its people, "a stage" for action and interaction. The section starts with a description of the physical plant and its people and their feelings; its history, status and functions; its students and courses; its staff and staffing; and some aspects of its culture. It also presents a historical review of inservice at the Centre based mainly on document review.

1.4.1 Opening the Centre's Door

Physically, the Centre is small and compact. It shares with the French and Russian

LSP Centres the ground floor of a three-story building, which houses the Faculty of Education. The Centre occupies the "lion's" share of the ground floor. Still, this share is insufficient, and teaching takes place all day long to allow maximum use of the limited space. There are five seminar rooms, a lab, Director's and secretaries' offices, a staffroom, a library, and a janitor's cubicle. Unlike the case elsewhere at the University, the seminar rooms are small, centrally-heated, carpeted, and furnished with fans, tables and audio-visual facilities. Class size is small, as the maximum number allowed is 22 students. Thus teachers and learners have more opportunity to interact and get to know one another. One of the main features of the Centre, which is not often found in Syrian universities, is the staffroom. In this room, the teachers have two large noticeboards (one designated for "URGENT" messages), private lockers, resources cupboard, pigeon holes, a direct telephone line, a photocopier, a large seminar table, a typewriter, and self-service tea/coffee facilities. The majority of these are unavailable for teachers elsewhere in the system at large.

Two important "assets" of the Centre are its students and teachers. Students are "elite" because they are either selected for their past academic scores or self-motivated to learn English (see 1.4.3). The teachers are carefully chosen with an eye on their academic records, personalities, and characteristics. Most importantly perhaps is their feeling that the Centre contributes to their academic and social status. Therefore, the majority feel they belong to the Centre, and the Centre belongs to them. Enas, an experienced colleague, can be claimed to have voiced the feeling of the majority of the full-time teachers:

> All my achievements up till now are due to the Centre because, to tell you the truth, I have never thought of teaching English before ... My major is literature.

Asked whether she was willing to contribute to the present project and under what conditions, she said: "No conditions. I will do it with all my heart. ... The Centre is very dear to me. I'll always remember it". Suhair, a novice part-time teacher, feels almost the same:

> I'm a teacher assistant. I'm paid by the English Department. I can choose not to teach at the Centre, but I like teaching here, and I chose to teach here. We are not teaching for money; money is not everything.

Asked why she liked teaching at the Centre, Suhair said: "I don't know. Teachers interact. Students are close to the teachers. The number of students is helpful, unlike the faculty".

The Centre students and teachers are the main reasons behind its "uniqueness" in the local community. But, in my view, there are three other no less important factors: (a) its history and cultural links; (b) its Director's personal commitment to its advancement and good reputation; and (c) the language which the Centre is engaged in teaching. Languages are carriers of their cultures, and the Centre seems to have integrated certain features of native English cultures without losing its local "flavour" and national identity. Evidence of these claims appears in the following sections and throughout the thesis.

1.4.2 History, Status, Functions, and Facilities

The Centre was set up in 1980 as part of a five-year project sponsored by the ODA/British Council (see Ministry of higher Education 1971: 392; Bowers 1979). The British input was two KELT (key English language teaching) experts, and the Syrian two counterparts (Holliday and Cooke 1982). The KELTs' responsibility was to upgrade the overall standard of English language education at the University by introducing communicative programmes to meet academic and professional needs. This included training teachers and the counterparts. The project ended in 1985, and the Centre has been led by its present Director since then. The Centre seems to have been affected by politics in its early years. All KELT experts working at Syrian universities had to leave upon the sudden severance of political relations between Syria and Britain (1986-1992).

Currently, the Centre is accountable to the Board of Foreign Language Centres. The Board is chaired by the Vice-President for Academic Affairs. Document review has shown that several proposals initiated by the Centre Director have been approved by the Board and higher bodies. The Centre seems to be more independent in deciding its internal affairs than other departments concerned with teaching foreign languages. It enjoys a good deal of autonomy in many areas:

designing its courses and methodologies; assigning textbooks; selecting, recruiting, and training its teachers; and in several other matters that relate to course work, testing, and examinations.

At the time of my research, the Centre provided:

- courses for postgraduate students and teaching staff at the University;
- inservice training for English language teacher at the University; and
- research facilities and consultation for developing English language teaching.

Regarding inservice education for undergraduate level teachers, the Centre's role is restricted to offering them an annual inservice seminar.

As for its facilities, the Centre has a modest library, the best ELT collection in the country. However, except for the *English Teaching Forum*, there were no professional journals at the time of research. The Centre has three photocopiers, a computer, audio-visual equipment, and a language lab.

1.4.3 Students and Courses

Since this study involves classroom innovation, it is necessary to provide the necessary details about students and courses. The focus is mainly on those to which the study relates, the compulsory courses.

At the time of research, the Centre student population was about 500 a year. This consisted of two categories: (a) postgraduate students from all the University faculties and (b) University teaching staff. Students in both categories need English for academic and professional purposes, mainly for reading English references. Another basic student need, according to the ESPC documents (1996), is "to get away from a teacher-centred, knowledge transfer attitude to language learning and to understand ... that language learning is an open ended activity ... facilitated by group work". Therefore, the teaching methodology adopted is largely communicative; the teacher is described as a "catalyst of learning" and a "fellow-communicator". She/he is expected to "advise", "encourage", and "manage", "not

to give the lesson".

For the most part, students are not full-time language learners; they have demanding job and study responsibilities elsewhere. Students' work load ranges between 16 and 70 hours a week, the highest being done by medical students (the target of classroom innovation, as we shall see later). Medical students follow 3-4 year MSc courses in their departments and have strong practical components as part of their training. The majority live and work together in the work/study places, different University hospitals spread over the campus. Overload appears to impact negatively on these students' attitude to courses (see 2.5.1.3).

Six courses were in operation at the time of research (see Table 1.1).

Table 1.1 Courses at the ESPC

Course Type	Intensity	Length and Frequency a Year	No of Hrs/Wk
A. Compulsory			
- Medical Sciences	- semi-intensive	- 24 wks/1	10
- Science and Technology	- intensive	- 12 wks/3	20
- Humanities	- intensive	- 12 wks/3	20
- Teacher Assistants	- semi-intensive	- 12 wks/2	10
B. Optional			
- Professors	- unintensive	- 3 months/3	6
- IELTS	- semi-intensive	- 3 months/2	10

As the table shows, the majority of courses are compulsory. They are either pre-sessional (followed before the specialist course) or in-sessional (during it). They also differ in length and intensity. Compulsory courses are externally regulated. That is, the number of hours, attendance requirements, exam components, and pass/fail scores are specified. For example, attendance rate should be no less than 75 % in order to be eligible for taking the examination. To pass, a student should get at least a 50% average. Those who fail are given two other chances. Passing

the ESP examination is a requirement for enrolling as a Master's or PhD student.

The level of Master's students in English varies a good deal, even at the level of the same group. Students will have learnt English as a compulsory subject for 10 to 12 years when they start the course. However, because they come from different backgrounds, their educational opportunities have not been the same. The majority in the Humanities (Hum) are false beginners, while Science and Technology (Sci-Tec) and Medical (Med) students are of lower intermediate or intermediate level, respectively. On the whole, Med students are the most advanced in language proficiency, and the Hum ones are the least so, with the Sci-Tec falling somewhere in between. Table 1.2 illustrates the pass/fail rate of these students in the diagnostic test at the start of courses.

Table 1.2 Master's Students' Results in the Diagnostic Test (1992-1993)

Students	Total Number	Passed (%)	Failed (%)
Med	135	111 (82.22%)	24 (17.78%)
Sci-Tec	99	39 (39.39%)	60 (60.61%)
Hum	104	11 (10.57%)	93 (89.43%)

Source: ESPC Documents (researcher's unpublished data)

In the Master's courses, students are streamed according to their general fields (Hum, Sci-Tec, and Med). In the Professors (Prof) and Teacher Assistants (TA) courses, on the other hand, students are grouped according to their levels (beginner to advanced).

An integrated skills syllabus is used for all the courses, focusing in each on the skill(s) needed most by the students in the particular course. The Master's students course syllabus consists of three major components: Core, Social, and Lab. Each concentrates on a macro skill and has several "Units". The skills needed are reading and writing (Core); speaking (Social); and listening (Lab). Recently (1996), a general English component (mostly grammar oriented) has been introduced into the Hum and Sci-Tec courses. Course hours are distributed according to students' need for a particular skill. Overall, 50% of course time is allocated to the Core and the rest to the other components (see Appendix 1.2). A

challenging Core component in the majority of the Centre courses is the Academic Project Paper (APP). It has been selected for this reason to be the focus of teacher action research (TAR) in this study. Therefore, there is a need to define and discuss it in some detail.

The APP is defined in the syllabus as a "step-by-step guidance and instruction on the development of an academic research paper". The goal is "is to ... produce a piece of simulated academic research, using acquired skills and learned processes" (ESPC documents 1996). Holliday (1988: 77), the original co-designer of the Centre courses, describes the APP component as "an evaluation device". It provides contexts for formative and summative evaluation of different aspects of the course: "content", "skills taught", "student performance", and "the overall methodological approach" (*ibid.*). In learning APP writing, students are expected to develop their communicative skills, which are expected to transfer to other types of writing (e.g., essays) and feed back into other course components (e.g., reading). It is allocated 1-2 hours per week, depending on course intensity. In examination terms, the paper itself, the product, has not been given a mark until recently and was used as a shared ground for discussion between an examiner and the learner on the basis of which the student's oral fluency (speaking) was assessed for the end-of-course exam (the only criterion of success or fail in the course). The oral interview, which is a simulation of a "viva", was given ten points out of 100, the total exam score for all components (see 2.5.2.4 for changes).

Research and experience at the Centre have shown that the APP is the most challenging component for both students and teachers (Holliday 1988; Daoud 1995a). The two main reasons often mentioned are course time allocation and lack of experience on the part of both students and teachers in research and writing (see 2.5.2). This component was the main focus of a study I undertook in 1995 (Daoud 1995b; see also Daoud 1996 a and b and 1997a), the findings of which have motivated the present one (see 1.5 and 1.6).

Recently, a Core Unit, called "Oral Presentation" (OP) has been integrated with the APP component. In this unit, students learn OP skills and present their APP research to the class upon completion. In doing so, they practice and get

feedback on their individual researches from peers and the teacher. However, because of the time constraint, only a few students, often the competent, have the chance to present their papers. As we shall see in section 2.5.1.3, the learners are unhappy about this situation and feel the need for more attention to the OP aspect of project writing (see also 2.5.2.3). Their needs and expectations have influenced the Main Phase TD project design (4.3.3 and 4.5.3.1).

1.4.4 Staff, Staffing, and the Teachers

The Centre staff can be divided into (a) administrative; (b) ancillary; and (c) teaching. The Center is well-staffed administratively. This is a phenomenon strikingly different from the case elsewhere in other University departments, considering its relatively small number of students. There are six administrative staff members: the Director, three secretaries and two librarians. Ancillary staff consist of a typist and four janitors. There is evident stability as far as these two categories are concerned, at least since 1989, the year I joined the Centre.

However, the number of teachers seems to be in constant flux. This phenomenon amongst English language teachers was observed by Holliday and Cooke (1982: 29) at the University level. At the time the baseline study was carried out only nine out of 26 teachers mentioned in the official staff list were full-time. Relatively speaking, there is stability as far as this full-time group is concerned, unlike the situation in the case of part-time or contracted teachers. Staff loss is a problem that worries the Director, as evident in a recent article she published in Arabic in the University's News Bulletin. In it, she highlights the Centre's achievements in the past decade and pinpoints the problems of staff loss and shortage of full-time teachers. The article seems to be an implicit plea to the authorities to grant the Centre legal and administrative status of a faculty, including control over staffing.

With the exception of one teacher-graduate of Aleppo University, all the teachers who were at the Centre in the Baseline Phase had studied at and graduated from the English Department, Damascus University. As we shall see later in the

results and discussion chapters, TAR has contributed to enhancing the bond between the Centre action researchers (both full and part-time, experienced and novice) and between them and the Centre and its students.

1.4.5 Aspects of the Centre Culture

The focus of this section is three aspects of the Centre culture. They have been selected because of their relevance to and influence on the present study. These are: coordination, inservice policy, and formality and casualness.

a) Coordination: Coordination is an internal management policy. It started in the late 1980s with the appointment of experienced teachers as course coordinators (a position similar in many ways to heads of departments in the British school system). There is an MA Course Coordinator, a Prof Course Coordinator, and so on. Recently, coordination extended to involve novice teachers and other activities (evaluation, testing, etc.), including extracurricular ones. The Director described the coordination system as "middle management" and the coordinators as "middle managers". "The aim", she said, "is to decentralize work ... [and] involve members of academic staff in administrative and academic decisions" (recorded interview). Upon reviewing the minutes of some coordination meetings, I realized that coordination was a demanding task and that the coordinators were the link between the Director and other teachers.

b) Inservice policy: Inservice policy at the Centre appears to be in sharp contrast with that in the wider system. Whereas attendance is optional and unregulated elsewhere, it is compulsory ("a must") at the Centre. The reason, the Director explained, is her awareness "of the time pressure on the teachers", "many" of whom "have teaching responsibilities elsewhere". The teachers on their part seem to have accepted this policy. They are aware that it is done in their interest, their students' and that of the Centre. Recently, this mandatory policy has extended to include

teacher research, as document review has shown:

> Action research: Ts have to write a paper this year. Topics have to do with what you are doing in the classroom. An abstract is expected to be handed in next meeting, after the holiday. (minutes of a staff meeting: 4/1/96)

This new action research policy was confirmed by the baseline interviews (see 2.5.2.2). It might have direct relationship with the terms of reference of an externally-funded teacher education project in which the Centre is currently involved (see 1.4.6.4).

c) "Formality and casualness": "Formality and casualness" relate to institutional culture and management styles. The two terms are taken from Holliday (1994: 44), who has observed them, among other cultural aspects, in Egyptian and Syrian academic and professional cultures. Formality is a characteristic of the Centre's administrative culture, and is openly acknowledged. Asked about the extent she was accessible to the teachers, students, and administrative staff, the Director said she was "accessible to all these, mostly administrative staff because they come in and out with all the paper work".

> But as far as the teachers and students are concerned, I am accessible but in an organised way. ... I had difficulty in establishing a system or order whereby teachers were made to understand that I was always available on one condition: that they make an appointment. (Baseline interview)

1.4.6 A Historical Review of Inservice Training

Review of the Centre inservice files (1980-1996) supported by data obtained from published and unpublished reports, including my in-depth interview with the Centre Director and also my personal communication with three native experts who were extensively involved in teacher training (among other things) at Damascus University, have shown four distinctive phases in inservice provision at the Centre. I have classified them according to the main providers:

(a) The British-sponsored phase;

(b) The American-sponsored phase;

(c) The multi-resourced phase; and

(d) The move-to-self-reliance phase.

I will give some details about each, pointing out what has been done, with particular reference to the focus and methodology of teacher training/development, noting attention to teaching academic writing, if any, and any teacher qualities or characteristics mentioned by the teacher educators involved.

1.4.6.1 The British-Sponsored Phase (1980-1985)

Inservice activities in the early years of setting up the Centre (1980-1985) were mainly led by two KELT experts, and, often, teachers on the undergraduate level were also involved (see Holliday and Cooke 1983; and Holliday 1984). Inservice came in the form of workshops, seminars, and feedback to individual teachers following classroom observation and was skill-based (Holliday and Cooke 1982). The main focus was implementing communicative methodology to upgrade the level of teaching English at the University in general. Training focused on areas of need identified by the Means Analysis, the KELTs' term for ethnographic action research, which was mainly covert in nature (i.e., relied heavily on participant observation). Theory and practice were integrated with more emphasis on the latter. The KELTs also mention training their two Syrian counterparts in the use of Means Analysis and indicate that "the counterparts ... will take over the job of this research after the KELT advisers leave". They believe that "the Means Analysis should never finish and should provide a research base for all ESP Centre activities in the future" (*ibid.*: 17).

The KELTs (1982: 23-4) identify teachers' "positive" and "weak points". Two positive points are frequently mentioned: "competence in the language system" and "ability to command their students' respect". Regarding "weak points", they mention teachers' "inability to analyse" problems and their lack of knowledge about "the value of classroom research". However, they do not mention or give details on training the teachers to analyse problems or carry out classroom research. Overall,

they praise the teachers, noting their "power to innovate and change the direction of their approach" (*ibid.*: 22), and at the same time mention resistance to change. They classify the teachers into two categories: "conservatives and progressives", and mention that the conservatives were generally "very cautious" but innovated "in spite of themselves" (*ibid.*: 24). This "in spite of themselves" was followed up in my personal communication with Holliday (who wished to be identified). He confirmed this approach and explained the reason:

> If teachers showed that they were resistant, we wouldn't just give in to them. If this line is taken anywhere, no curriculum change would ever take place. ... We were very strict, not always entertaining complaints, saying that the teacher should try something all the way before deciding. (e-mail: September 1996)

There is little evidence in both the inservice files and the KELTs' unpublished report (Holliday and Cooke 1982) of academic writing as a training focus (but see Holliday 1988). Teaching reading and classroom management appeared to be their main concern because of the need for them on both the undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

As I have mentioned earlier, British assistance was hampered by the severing of diplomatic relations in 1986. This went on till 1992. During this time, American support was sought for inservice and other activities.

1.4.6.2 The American-Sponsored Phase (1988-1992)

Second phase inservice activities were led by American experts, whose assignments at the Centre were arranged and sponsored by USIS (United States Information Service) in coordination with the Centre and Damascus University. From 1988 to 1992 (inclusive), American involvement is the only one evident in inservice documents.

In the four years, eleven workshops were led by American experts for the University EFL teachers on different aspects of language teaching. The titles are: classroom interaction; pair/group work; reading, writing and critical thinking; motivation; action research for teachers; methods versus strategies; teaching vocabulary; teaching writing: the magic formula; classroom management; reading

comprehension; and error analysis in ESL writing. It is clear that the focus of training was broad during this phase, and more attention was given to writing than in the British-sponsored phase. This seems to coincide with a movement in this direction in ESL/EFL in general (see Robinson 1988 and Kroll 1990).

Among the American experts who worked at the Centre during this second phase was Colman (who also wished to be identified). She had three assignments at the ESPC, a total of over one and a half years (1989-90; 91; 1994). She taught on courses, designed syllabuses, trained teachers, and supervised research (see Colman 1998 and Hassan 1994). I was one of two newly recruited teachers whom she was allocated the task of training in EFL/ESL methodology. Her approach has left a deep impression on my mind, and I would like to acknowledge it in the way we acknowledge any source of knowledge or information, particularly because of its influence on the CAWRP design and methodology. Colman, with extensive experience in training language teachers both in the United States and abroad, approached the ESPC and its teachers in a sensitive and informed manner (as I felt and came to realise upon reading the literature in preparation for this project). She

- invited and encouraged the Centre teachers to help her in leading inservice workshops because she had "realized the existence" of "untapped potential" and "lack of self-confidence" (personal communication: September 1996);
- involved the two teachers she trained (of whom I was one) in critical reading of ESL theory (e.g., Krashen's SLA theories; Suggestopedia; Community Language Teaching, etc.), and asked them to evaluate this theory, in writing, with their context and teaching/learning experience in mind;
- relied a great deal on motivation and motivating the teachers (and learners), verbally and in writing;
- introduced action research in a seminar and encouraged the teachers to carry out research and supervised their writing. Six responded, and two were published, eventually (see Jabbour 1992 and Daoud 1994a); and
- was sensitive to context needs and the teachers' and students' potentials and individual differences.

The approach and strategies Colman used to motivate and involve the teachers contributed to their personal and professional development. Many, including myself, lacked self-confidence, initially, and were reluctant to research and write. In designing this project, I have made use of the lessons learnt from my native teacher trainers, both in Syria and the UK. These I sum up below in four maxims, which I have found important upon reading the literature on TD and classroom innovation:

- Teacher involvement is essential for teacher development (Stenhouse 1975).
- Teacher development and student development are reciprocally related (see Fullan and Hargreaves 1992a).
- Critical reading and writing are necessary for the creation of educational knowledge (Wallace 1995; McNiff 1990).
- "Never take teachers' and students' 'I can't' for granted; teachers and students *can* if they are trusted and encouraged." (Colman: e-mail , September 1996).

1.4.6.3 The Multi-Resourced Phase (1993-1996)

Support for inservice in this phase came from four sources: British, American, European, and Syrian. As can be seen in Table 1.3, inservice provision between 1993-1996 took different forms. With the resumption of diplomatic relations with Britain, British support focused mainly on teacher education in the form of scholarships. During this phase, four members of staff gained higher qualifications (two PhDs and two MAs) from British universities in different areas of applied linguistics (evaluation, pragmatics, academic writing), and two other PhDs were on the way. Increasing teacher education/qualification motivated self-reliance.

Table 1.3 Inservice in the Multi-Resourced Phase

Provider(s)/Sponsors	Type of Provision	Beneficiaries	Duration
British Council	- book donations - seminars in the UK - scholarships for higher studies	- all staff - selected staff - selected staff	- long-term - 3-5 Wks - 1-3 Yrs
USIS	- pre-service training - Trainer Training Course - conference funding - inservice training	- new teachers - selected staff - applicants - all staff	- long-term - short-term - long-term - long-term
European Commission	- teacher training - trainer-training	- new teachers - selected staff	- long-term - short-term
ESPC Staff developers	- workshops and seminars - pre-service training	- all staff - new teachers	- long-term - long-term

1.4.6.4 The Move-to-Self-Reliance Phase

The Med-Campus Teacher Education Project (MCP) has marked the beginning of what I have termed "the move-to-self-reliance phase". The MCP is a major achievement. It had positive and negative impact on the CAWRP and, therefore, deserves space in this thesis. Information about it has been derived from two main sources: document review and a baseline interview with the Director.

The MCP is a long-term teacher education project launched in 1995. It is sponsored by the European Commission (see Selle 1995) and has as its main

objective the formation of "a cadre of teacher trainers who are capable of teaching on a teacher training programme in teaching English for specific purposes in order to upgrade the level of ESP at Syrian universities". The goal is the "establishment of a post-graduate certificate in teaching English for specific purposes".

Four institutions are involved in this project. The ESPC is the leading partner. The other three are the ESP Centre at Alexandria, Egypt; School of Education, University of Leeds; and University College, Cork, Ireland. The beneficiaries are the two ESP Centres in Damascus and Alexandria. Leeds University and University College, Cork, provide advice and experts. Their role is to set up the training course, train the trainers, provide outside stimulus and ideas, and evaluate the teacher training programmes. The ESPC Director is the Coordinator.

Like all externally funded projects, the MCP will be evaluated externally by experts from the European Commission. Several project-related activities and success indicators are mentioned: applied research, continuous training, temporary attachment, publications, seminars, and conferences. Under "Publications", publishing project-generated research articles in international journals is mentioned. Organising and participating "in local, regional and international conferences" are two activities mentioned under "Conferences".

The Commission paid two-thirds of the funds agreed, and four teachers and a technician were sent to Leeds University to follow a five-week trainer-training course in October 1995. Upon their return, they applied what they had learnt in a one-week course designed to train 13 novice teachers at the ESP Centre.

The MCP activities perhaps explain the Director's insistence that teachers carry out AR and her approval of and support to the CAWRP proposal. In designing the Main Phase study, I myself had the availability of the MCP funds in mind and encouraged colleagues to make use of them by doing research, writing papers and presenting them at conferences. Eventually, three teacher-researchers got grants from the MCP's money and presented their CAWRP-based research papers at regional conferences.

At the same time, the MCP might have negatively affected the CAWRP. Impending external evaluation of the impact of the MCP on the Centre teachers and

students might have led the Director to impose constraints on the CAWRP in terms of space and time allocation and to arrest it when the teachers' involvement in it was clear (see 5.5.1; 5.5.2; and 6.2).

The next section takes us back in time to the period of initial reflection on the present study. It deals with the findings of my MA research project: "Feedback in the Process of Teaching and Learning Academic Writing" (1995b), which has motivated the present one.

1.5 The MA Study

Hopkins (1993: 1) and Nunan (1989a: 1) mention different reasons that motivate teachers to carry out research in their own work context. Three apply to my MA study **and** the present one:

- to enhance one's own personal and professional development;
- to support colleagues' development; and
- to get involved in educational innovation.

The MA study was motivated by problems my colleagues and I encountered in teaching the APP to postgraduate students in compulsory courses. It was a general feeling that students were not getting the desired benefit from it in spite of the enormous amount of time and effort put into it. The study investigated the problem through students' and teachers' perceptions and focused on the postgraduate medical course, the major one. Two hundred students (100 current and 100 ex-students) and their teachers were involved, and a multi-method approach was used for data collection, mainly in-depth interviews and questionnaires. Participants' views of different aspects of the APP component were sought. The main focus, however, was methodology, particularly feedback. Students and teachers were also asked to recommend ways for improving the teaching and learning of APP writing.

The majority of students and teachers expressed dissatisfaction with the APP writing methodology in ways that revealed differences between the teachers'

and their students' expectations and their respective views of the basic problems. Many students commented on the anxiety-generating teaching methodology of APP writing, referring mostly to the time constraint (theirs and that of the course) and their inexperience in research and writing as the main inhibiting factors. They did not agree with teachers who insisted on polished end-products, and admitted "copying" from sources for lack of time and/or linguistic ability. The general feeling among them was that they should not be penalised for copying since they were beginners in English writing. A few wondered why they were not allowed to work on collaborative projects and help one another. Others criticised the materials, saying that "real" research papers should be used as "models" in teaching the APP, not ex-students' APPs. For the majority of students, however, the teacher was the most important factor in learning APP writing. Many commented on the teacher variable, praising or criticising teaching styles. A few students expressed their belief that teachers of research writing should be researchers and writers themselves.

The APP teachers, on the other hand, complained about their students' weakness in English, in general, and in writing, in particular. They expected students to know how to write a paper in English after 11 years of language learning at school and university. They tended to believe that students should be heavily penalised for plagiarism and were unhappy about their reluctance to do homework on the "pretext" of not having time to do so. At the same time they highlighted positive characteristics they believed students had, describing them as intelligent, obedient, and respectful of their teachers. Unlike their students, the teachers did not come up with specific suggestions on how to deal with the APP teaching/learning problems. They tended to blame the educational system at large or the students for the challenges, indicating that the problem is "over there", not "in here". In a staff meeting with all the Centre staff at the end of this MA study's fieldwork, I invited the teachers of medical students to reflect more deeply on their experience and point out the positive student characteristics which we would be able to build on to get the best of them. All mentioned students' positive response to pair/group work and discussion of general and intellectually challenging topics,

not purely medical ones.

Research data, however, showed that group work and discussion were the least used in APP teaching. Two factors were believed to be the reason: (a) the requirement of individual project writing and (b) the time constraint. The implication of the former factor is that students have little or no interest in each other's papers and that each teacher has to supervise a substantial number of students and projects (20-60, depending on work load). The time factor, however, was the most serious. Allocating only one hour (out of 10) per week to the APP component in the medical course meant that students had to do all the writing at home, and the teachers had to rely mainly on written commentary for feedback. In other words, student-student, and student-teacher face-to-face interaction and collaboration (which are highly recommended in real and pedagogical contexts of academic writing) were lacking because of contextual variables. Additionally, 50% of APP teachers were novices, and the concepts of ESP and academic writing were still foggy in their minds. Overall, it was found that the majority of teachers, both experienced and novice,

- lacked conceptual knowledge of teaching writing;
- were not clear about their role and that of their students and, with evidently honest intentions, tended to spoonfeed the learners, the majority of whom preferred the tradition of being teacher-dependent;
- focused on the product rather than the process; andspent enormous amounts of time on correcting APPs in isolation, focusing mainly on surface errors and lower-level concerns.

The study recommended:

- raising teachers' awareness of academic writing methodology, in general, and feedback in particular;
- encouraging and supporting collaboration on different levels (between students,

students and their teacher, and experienced and novice teachers); and

- changing from individual to team writing of APP projects, thereby reducing substantially the number of projects to be supervised, giving the teachers and students more time and opportunity to meet face-to-face to help and learn from one another in a "collaborative relationship" (Zamel 1985: 97).

1.6 The Present Study

Findings from the 1995 study motivated me to pursue my search for appropriate ways to implement its three recommendations. My aim was to initiate changes on two levels: personal and institutional. On the personal level, I wanted to mend my ways and become a better teacher of academic writing. More aware and wiser after one year of inservice education at CELTE, Warwick University, I experienced a feeling of guilt for caring more about the product of writing than the writers. I believed that the majority of my colleagues had the same problems since all of us were the product of one system and one English Department. For this reason, whenever I read something relevant I made a copy of it, wanting to share the knowledge with colleagues once back home.

On the institutional level, I felt the need to initiate change on two levels: TD and classroom pedagogy. Traditional inservice training has helped in improving our teaching in general, but not so much in analysing, understanding, and dealing with our day-to-day problems. I wanted, therefore, to test in practice whether TAR, in which teachers extend their roles and become teacher-researchers (Stenhouse 1975; Hopkins 1993; Nunan 1989 a and b), would improve our professional situation. On the level of pedagogy, we seemed unable to apply in practice what we preached in theory. Reflecting on students' and teachers' suggestions for improvement in the 1995 study at the start of my PhD research, I concluded that we, the teachers, were part of the problem and should be part of the "solution". It was evident that we needed more understanding of the nature of academic writing, of ourselves, and of our students: their needs, expectations, motivation, problems, and worries. In order for this understanding to take place, I

believed that we should go through the process we required of our students: **do our own research and write up**. We cannot say "'We do not have time" because our students do not have time, too, but have to research and write in order to learn and develop. My literature readings ended in writing a "project proposal" to hand in to the Centre Director at the beginning of a baseline investigation (see Appendix 1.3). In it, I proposed collaborative TAR for teacher and pedagogic development, and hypothesised, depending on my experience and literature readings, that collaborative TAR would be able to ease the constraints faced by the writing teachers and their students. I also suggested experimenting with team writing, the major recommendation in my MA study, within the framework of the proposed TD project. As for the methodological approach, it was perceived as exploratory (following Allwright and Bailey 1991). I wrote:

> The form that implementation will take place follows what is recommended in action research methodology, which stresses the importance of testing hypothetical innovations before introducing changes in the curriculum or teacher development programmes. (early project proposal)

Chapter Two presents the findings of the baseline investigation, including the Director's, teachers', and students' responses to my initiatives.

The next section focuses on my beliefs and expectations in relation to the relevance and viability of the project before embarking on the baseline investigation. These should be clarified and justified in line with the principles of practitioner research. The reason, according to Lomax (1995), is for others as well as the researcher to find out whether, to what extent, and for what main reason(s) beliefs and expectations have been challenged or consolidated by the study.

1.6.1 My Early Beliefs and Expectations

Before the baseline research was carried out, I believed that the study was relevant to the needs of our students, teachers, the ESP Centre, and ELT in the country in general. This belief was based on the findings of my 1995 study and my first-hand experience of the value of TAR for personal and professional development. I also

believed that the project would be viable only if supported by the Centre Director, and I was sure she would support it. Such belief was based on my awareness of her constant endeavours to enhance the status of the Centre and her belief in teacher role and teacher research in securing this reputation. My worry, however, (deriving from contextual experiences) related to the tension between the democratic nature of AR and the rather authoritative decision-making processes at the Centre. Another belief of mine was that novice teachers would accept the new ideas and initiatives more readily than experienced ones. Novices seemed to me to be motivated to develop and pursue higher studies abroad and might find the project relevant to their needs and interests. Experienced colleagues are generally overloaded with teaching and administrative responsibilities and have family obligations much more than novice teachers. I thought that such factors might prevent or limit their ability to commit themselves to a demanding project.

1.6.2 The Study's Stages, Aims, Tasks, and Procedures

As I have mentioned before, this study was carried out over two main phases, each of which had a follow-up stage. The baseline investigation was carried out by the end of the 1995-1996 academic year, and the CAWRP was planned to be implemented in the following year. The original staging, suggested in the project proposal, was modified in the light of the findings of the baseline investigation. One main finding was that the teachers needed more theory orientation than expected. Therefore, the Director and I agreed that the first trimester, the least busy, was the best time for orientation, and the second and third trimesters would be suitable for implementing TAR, as all the Centre courses would be running, including the medical course, the main target of classroom innovation. On this basis, the time scale suggested by the end of the Baseline Phase extended over the academic year 1996-1997, by the end of which teachers who would carry out AR were expected to have completed their research projects and writing for conference participation. However, this plan did not work in practice because of contextual variables. The timeline that emerged had three stages and a shorter period (see Table 1.4 and Table 1.5).

Table 1.4 The Baseline Phase: Tasks, Procedures, and Related Aims

Baseline Phase (4 May-15 June 1996)	Related General Aims
Tasks and procedures **1) Do the basics.** • Discuss the proposal with the Director; get access to documents, teachers, and classrooms; and express your desire to report on the MA study. • Introduce yourself and the aims of the research to the teachers and get their consent for interviews, observation, etc. • Acquaint yourself with what has happened. • Report on the MA study and get feedback . **2) Collect baseline data.** • Review documents and teachers' theses. • Interview staff; observe classes, video a few APP sessions, talk to students and record and observe their response to the innovation, logistical problems, etc. • Use survey questionnaires as needed. • Go beyond the ESPC and collect context data. **3) Report back and plan ahead.** • Report to the staff on the overall findings of the Baseline investigation and re-clarify the aims, roles, requirements, and obligations. • Allow others to express their conditions, expectations, and worries. • Invite staff to sign up if convinced. • Find a project coordinator. • Say what you intend to do next. **4) End with a farewell "party".**	**Research aims** 1. To investigate the viability and substantiate the relevance of the project. 2. To collect baseline data. 3. To agree with participants on the type, timing, requirements, activities, and "ethical obligations" of a "collaborative" teacher development project. **TD and Pedagogic Aims** 1. To raise awareness about a need for knowledge of theoretical principles that underlie teaching/learning academic writing. 2. To raise awareness about the importance of teacher-teacher, student-teacher, and teacher-administrator collaboration for teacher and student development. 3. To "launch a campaign" in support of team writing in preparation for testing it through teacher-initiated action research. 4. To trigger teacher reflection and self-evaluation. 5. To raise awareness about the role of TAR and writing for teacher and student development.
Follow-up (June-November 1996) (UK-Based) • Carry out a deeper analysis of the data with particular attention to needs, potentials, and possible threats. • Select basic materials and specify the tasks, the time needed, etc. • Mail the materials with clarification letters and an initial response questionnaire.	• To agree with participants on basic project materials and scheduling and timing of Main Phase Project teacher development activities.

Table 1.5 Main Phase Stages, Activities, Procedures, and Aims

Stages, Activities, Procedures	Related General Aims
Stage 1: *Orientation* (Nov. 1996-Jan. 1997) • Individual critical literature reading and evaluation • Group discussion circles (DCs) of published papers in academic writing • Oral presentations (OPs) based on literature critical reading and evaluation • Action research workshop (ARW) • Feedback from and to participants • Critical reflection and evaluation	To provide participants with learning opportunities to 1. raise their awareness of necessary concepts and practices in academic writing and action research 2. stimulate their critical reflection on and evaluation of project ideas and methodology and their learning from them; 3. raise awareness of needed pedagogical innovations (team writing and related feedback techniques); 4. motivate teacher involvement in classroom action research.
Stage 2: *Research and Reporting* (Jan.-Mar. 1997) • Literature reading • Data collection and analysis • Progress reporting (oral and/or written) • Consultation with peers/supervisors • Research diary writing • Feedback from and to participants • Classroom observation • Conference paper writing • Conference presentations at a regional conference	1. To facilitate the implementation of teacher action research and monitor its effect on teacher development; 2. To support the implementation of team writing and related activities and critical evaluation of their relevance and viability; 3. To provide opportunities for critical reflection and evaluation and the sharing and critiquing of teacher action research in a supportive environment; and 4. To encourage, support and facilitate conference paper writing and reporting.
Stage 3: *Summative Evaluation and Follow up* (Jan. 1997-Mar. 1999) • summative reflections and feedback on involvement and participation in the CAWRP and classroom research • formal and informal communication with participants	1. To discover the results of the participants' involvement in the Collaborative Academic Writing Research Project (CAWRP); 2. To find out about teacher continuation plans for teacher-initiated action research and classroom innovation.

The three stages are:

- Stage One: Orientation (Nov. 1996-Jan. 1997)
- Stage Two: Research and Reporting (Jan. 1997-Mar. 1997)
- Stage Three: Summative Evaluation and Follow-up (Jan. 1997-Mar. 1999)

These three stages overlapped because of contextual variables (exams, holidays, overload, etc.). Follow-up was needed to discover what had happened to TAR, following the end of fieldwork. It extended throughout the writing up stage and was added to the Summative Evaluation Stage in the final presentation of the report because of evident link between project evaluation and its continuity. Tables 1.4 and 1.5 on pages 27 and 28 show the range of tasks, procedures and activities at each stage of the research process and related aims.

1.7 The Research Questions

The research questions are Phase/Stage-related. The baseline investigation sought to answer two questions: "To what extent are teacher-initiated action research and team writing relevant and viable in the present circumstances?" and "What are the teachers' most urgent needs in relation to teaching academic writing?". The Main Phase, in its three stages, attempted to answer the following questions:

(a) The Orientation Stage

- How do the orientation stage activities contribute to the participants' development?

(b) The Research and Reporting Stage

- In what ways do teacher-initiated action research and related activities (discussion, reporting, conference participation, etc.) contribute to participants'

development?

- What can we discover about the interrelationship between teacher development and classroom innovation?

(c) The Summative Evaluation and Follow-up Stage

- Has teacher-initiated action research proved to be an effective and viable approach to teacher development in the participants' view? What are their justifications?
- What has happened to teacher-initiated action research and team writing, the classroom innovation, since fieldwork ended?

1.8 The Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is in eight chapters and 32 appendices. Chapter One is an introduction to the study: its area of enquiry and contribution; its context and motivation; stages and aims; and the research questions it has tried to answer. Chapter Two focuses on the baseline investigation: its methodology, findings, and their implications for the Main Phase study. Chapter Three is a review of relevant literature. Its main focus is current approaches to language teacher development, with particular emphasis on the action research approach. Part of the chapter is devoted to EFL/ESP teacher needs and challenges and another part to current perspectives of classroom innovation. Chapter Four focuses on project design and methodology. It gives more details on the theoretical principles, strategies, and procedures on which the Main Phase study, in particular, was based and shows how they worked in action. Chapter Five reports the findings in answer to the first research question, focusing on the contribution of the orientation activities to teacher development and classroom innovation. It takes a broad perspective, looking at the teacher group as a whole (a total of 20 out of 23 Centre teachers): their responses and reactions to project ideas and methodology. Its main sources of data are recordings, feedback questionnaires, and participant observation. Chapter Six focuses on the full participant teachers, those who carried out AR and reported

on it (8 out of 20 orientation Stage participants). It presents two case studies, starting with the case's entry point, the baseline situation, and then moving to the Main Phase and reporting the findings with reference to the two major research questions that relate to the Research and Reporting Stage. One case study exemplifies the experienced teachers, and those who carried out research individually. The second case stands for the novices, and those who carried out research collaboratively. The former is a female and the latter is a male teacher. Chapter Seven reports on the participants' summative evaluation of the project and the effect of this evaluation on project continuity. Chapter Eight summarises the main findings and discusses and evaluates them with reference to the literature and design principles and methodology. It sums up the lessons learnt from the study, considers its significance and limitations, and makes a number of recommendations. Finally, the appendices (in Volume II) provide more evidence of what has been done in the research process and how.

CHAPTER TWO

The Baseline Investigation

2.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the baseline investigation. It has five main parts. Part one presents a rationale for the baseline. Part two discusses the research approach and methodology. The focus of part three is on the research techniques and procedures considered useful in the process of enquiry. Part four is about the baseline data analysis and the findings related to the two baseline research questions mentioned in section 1.7. The first question aims at investigating the relevance and viability of the present project, that is its acceptability by the main stakeholders: the teachers, students, and administration. The second question involves investigation of the teachers' needs in relation to teaching/learning academic writing, the Academic Project Paper (APP) in particular. The final part discusses the main implications of the findings for the Main Phase study.

2.2 Rationale

As mentioned in Chapter One , the teacher development (TD) orientation in this project is teacher-initiated action research (TAR), which implies a context-sensitive approach. There is a fortunate co-incidence here between current approaches to AR project design and that of ELT/ESP programmes or courses, particularly in the case of projects or programmes intended for EFL contexts. Both action research and ELT/ESP projects start with investigating context needs and variables, testing the ground for project relevance and viability, and then building the subsequent design (or refining it) in the light of the findings (see Bowers 1979; Brumfit 1983a; 1984a;

Holliday 1984; Kennedy 1987 and 1988; Robinson 1991). Hopkins (1993: 67), for example, advises teacher- researchers to "take a broad area of enquiry", "carry out the initial enquiry", and "gradually focus the enquiry". In this way, a more specific research focus will emerge as a result of "critical reflection" (*ibid.*: 66). One of the purposes of teacher research he mentions is "evaluating ... school priorities (p. 1) and acting on them.

Ten principles elicited from different literatures on professional development, innovation, programme design, educational management, and research methodology guided the approach to enquiry in this study, including that in the Baseline Phase:

- Integration of theory, practice, and context knowledge (Brumfit 1983b; Brumfit and Rossner 1982; Waters 1988; Johnson 1989; Parrott 1991; Stake 1995);
- Careful early planning and clarity about one's purpose, beliefs and values (Havelock and Huberman 1977; Hayes 1983; Coleman 1987; Hamilton 1993);
- Acceptance of the project proposal by the management of the institution and, subsequently, the research participants (Adams and Chen 1981; Fullan 1991);
- Relevance and viability of the project (Brown 1983; Hammersley 1992; Hopkins 1993; Kennedy 1988);
- Direct and/or indirect involvement of all the stakeholders (Fullan 1991; Nunan 1989a; Horwitz 1987; Sharp 1990);
- Needs identification and the establishment of priorities (Richards and Hino 1983; Brindley 1989; Galloway 1993; West 1994);
- Clarification of project aims and ethical obligations of all participants (White 1987; Kennedy 1988; Hopkins 1993);
- Use of appropriate, compatible, and context-sensitive methodologies, materials, tasks, activities, and procedures (Swales 1980; Rea 1983; Ellis 1986; Doff 1987; Hedge 1987; Wallace 1991; Holliday 1994; Coleman 1996 a, b, and c; Webb 1996a);
- Integration of management, evaluation, and development (White 1993; Hargreaves and Hopkins 1991; Elliott 1991; Bell and Day 1991; Coleman 1992; Bennett *et al.*

1992; Riches 1994 a and b; Hopkins *et al.* 1994; Holliday 1994; Stephenson 1994; Germaine and Rea-Dickins 1995; Plant 1995; Corrie 1995); and

- Flexibility and avoidance of rigidity and orthodoxy (Bolitho 1988; Robinson 1991; Phillipson 1992a & b; Holliday 1994; Cortazzi and Jin 1996).

2.3 Research Approach and Methodology

The research approach in which this study operates is naturalistic qualitative enquiry (see Denzin and Lincoln 1994a). It subscribes to the view that "'facts'" are laden with theory, propositional and personal (Miles and Huberman 1994). It affirms "the existence and importance of the subjective" (*ibid.*: 4) and does not believe that "truth" exists detached from the beliefs and values of the researcher. Beliefs and values are central to teaching, often in very personal and local ways (Nixon1995). They are also not static and tend to change as knowledge and experience increase (Lomax 1995). Knowledge, therefore, is seen as provisional and "contingent upon the historical context within which phenomena are observed and interpreted" (Nunan 1992a: xii). The specific research approach is eclectic in nature and works within the hermeneutic paradigm (see Elliott 1993a, b and c; Freeman 1995 and 1996a, b, and c; Freeman and Richards 1993 and 1996 a & b). It can be characterised as "ethnographic action research" (AR, in short) and has been influenced by a combination of insights from numerous sources, mainly humanist psychology, action research, and ELT/ESP literature on projects, particularly that related to Third World contexts.

McNiff's theoretical and practical advice on "How to Start an Action Research Study" (see chapter 5 in McNiff 1988: 71-72) has been influential. She warns teacher-researchers that "Thinking will change"; "Mistakes will happen"; and "Politics will intrude". She concludes by saying: "Action research needs teachers of courage". At the same time, she points out that "Tolerance and good humour are vital" and adds:

> The action researcher is in a position of leadership, and in the public eye. If he can keep his head he will quickly earn a reputation for himself and his project that they are of worth. Respect is worn dearly, and it is earned not by vaunting success but by coping with potential failure. (*ibid.*: 72)

In relation to EFL projects in the Third World, I was influenced by Holliday's writings, particularly his *Appropriate Methodology and Social Context* (1994). The reason I have tried to build on Holliday's work is that it is mostly based on experience in the Arab world, including a major ELT/ESP project in Syria (see Holliday 1984, 1991 a and b, and 1992; Holliday and Cooke 1982, 1983; see also 4.3.3 for details). Holliday (1994: 161) points out that ELT project "methodology must be sensitive to the prevailing cultures surrounding any given classroom". However, while many experts in educational innovation support taking local structures into consideration, they do not see yielding to them helpful to innovation. I have found Widdowson's (1993: 271) argument convincing:

> Too much respect for existing tradition can easily be used as an excuse for inertia and the maintenance of a status quo which favours the powerful and the privileged. There is no advantage to be gained in putting up protective barriers against incoming ideas in order to conserve the integrity of traditional practices. But new ideas do need to be mediated effectively and appropriately, that is to say, evaluated for relevance by critical appraisal and application. And this is where teacher education comes in.

Widdowson (*ibid.*: 266) also argues that enabling teachers to carry out AR in their classrooms is teacher education.

2.4 Procedure and Instruments

This section gives details about the main research participants in the baseline research and on the data collection tools and procedures.

2.4.1 Getting Access

Though a full-time teacher at the ESPC, I approached the field through the Director's Office, as it is the norm in field research (see Table 1.4). She approved the research proposal (Appendix 1.3) and gave me access to the teachers. She also advised me to meet her Evaluation Coordinator, who would update me on what had happened in the past year. Additionally, she endorsed the idea of reporting on my MA study in a staff

meeting and made attendance of it "mandatory". Following my meeting with the Director, I forwarded a letter of introduction to all colleagues, several of whom were novices and unknown to me. In my letter, I asked for their consent for interviews (see Appendix 2.1).

2.4.2 Participants, Tools, and Procedures

My study plan was to broaden the base of contributors to the baseline data to include all the stakeholders. The main ones were the insiders: ESPC teachers, students, and key administrators. I also felt the need to interview the Head of the English Department, who was responsible for teacher recruitment and allocation at the undergraduate level and two of the Department's teaching staff who were frequently mentioned by the novice teachers in the interviews because of their influence on them in general and on their learning of writing, in particular.

A wide-range of tools and procedures were relied on in the baseline investigation (see Table 1.4). Some were basic, and those I will present and discuss in detail. The others helped to form an overall accurate picture of context needs, potentials and threats. The main tool was in-depth interviews with 20 teachers and three administrators at the ESPC (see Box 2.1).

2.4.2.1 In-depth Interviews

I have found life history research of particular use for investigating teachers' past experiences, beliefs and values, (see Smith 1994; Clandinin and Connelly 1994; Thomas 1995). Life history has been found particularly useful in studying teachers' lives and careers (see Connelly and Clandinin 1988 and 1990; Nias 1988; Nias and Aspinwall 1995; Huberman 1989 & 1993a; Goodson 1992 & 1995). Fontana and Frey (1994: 363) point out that "New directions in qualitative interviewing give increased attention to the voices and feelings of the respondents". This new direction is evident in many studies on teaching and teachers published in the past 15 years or so in the field of

general education (see Calderhead 1987 and 1988; Day *et al.* 1993). This trend has influenced language teacher education in the 1990s (see Richards and Nunan 1990), as evident in recent publications (Freeman and Richards 1996a and b; Bailey and Nunan 1996 a, b, and c; Howard and Brown 1997).

Box 2.1 Baseline Data Sources

Centre Sources

1. Recorded in-depth interviews with 23 ESPC staff (out of about 30)
2. On-site student Group interviews in 5 classes of current students
3. Teacher survey questionnaires:
   - Pre-MA Report Q
   - Post-MA Report Q
   - Area(s) of Interest Q
4. ESPC documents
5. Teachers' MA and PhD theses and published papers
6. Five classroom observations in different courses
7. 30-minute video taping of five APP sessions in different courses/classes
8. Researcher's diary (participant observation)
9. Formal letters to/from the Centre Director, project Coordinator, and Teachers in the Baseline follow-up period

Other Sources

1. Off-site Group interviews with a random sample of ex- and current medical students in their place of work/study (hospitals)
2. Formal interviews with four university professors: a) English Department Head; b) two professors involved in teaching writing to undergraduates / diploma students at the English Department; and c) the Head of teacher education Methodology section at the Faculty of Education
3. Unpublished MAs and PhDs and published official data
4. Personal communication with 3 native experts previously involved in teacher education and other curriculum activities at Damascus University and the ESPC
5. An informal meeting with the Chief English Educational Supervisor and two of his assistants at the Ministry of Education
6. Formal interviews with the British Council Director and a USIS Cultural Affairs Officer

Day (1993a: 126) used in-depth interviews in his evaluation of a new TD scheme through the perception of the teachers involved. He describes an in-depth interview as

> an interaction situation which is able to combine the complexities of factual and emotional responses in a richness of communicated understandings which cannot be found in other technical rational means of data collection.

He mentions some advantages and disadvantages of in-depth interviews. The main advantage is their potential in establishing "trust and confidentiality" with participants who "have different perspectives [and] motivations". He believes that in an interview situation, "the interviewer is the learner (of the interviewee's opinions, thoughts and feelings)". The main disadvantages of in-depth interviews, according to Day, are "bias (on the part of the interviewer) and reactivity (on the part of the interviewee)" (*ibid.*).

In the Baseline study, in-depth interviewing was valuable for establishing confidence, trust, and rapport with the teachers. It was effective in lowering their affective filter and generating their honest responses and reactions, as we shall see in section 2.5.

Participants in the baseline research were 20 ESPC teachers and three administrators. All were Syrian, and, with the exception of one, they studied at and graduated from the English Department, Damascus University. For the purpose of the baseline investigation, the 20 teachers interviewed were divided into two categories: novice (NT) and experienced (ET), according to the number of years of teaching experience (novice: up to 4 years; experienced: 5 or more). The third category included the three administrators, two of whom were also teaching a number of hours. Only four of the teachers had degrees in applied linguistics. The rest majored mainly in English language and literature and had no ELT or ESP qualifications. Tables 2.1 (a, b, and c) and 2.2 present the interviewees' personal and professional profiles and their

classification and pseudonyms. The Head Librarian (# 23 in Table 2.2) is not included in the experience profile because she was not teaching.

Table 2.1: Personal and Professional Profiles of the Interviewees

a) Age range

Age Range	22-32	33-43	44+
No. of Participants	12	4	7

b) Qualifications

Qualification	BA	Diploma	MA	PhD
No. of Participants	6	10	4	3

c) Experience

Experience in Years	None	1-4	5-9	10 +
APP	4	12	1	5
ESP + EGP	0	12	2	8

Table 2.2 The Baseline Interviewees and Their Pseudonyms

Experienced Teachers (ET)	Novice Teachers (NT)	Administrators
1. Nidal 2. Khitam 3. Jihad 4. Nour 5. Sonia 6. Shehab 7. Mustafa 8. Enas 9. Nada	10. Salma 11. Hind 12. Faten 13. Rola 14. Suhair 15. Sadik 16. Reem 17. Mazen 18. Zeina 19. Ola 20. Fawzi	21. Director (ET) 22. Personnel Secretary (NT) 23. Head Librarian

The data needed in the interviews were retrospective (what has happened); introspective (what is happening); and prospective (what is expected to happen). The questions asked were of different types: structured, semi-structured, and unstructured. The underlying rationale was to provide variety and allow for flexibility in adding, canceling, or modifying questions in view of interviewees' different ages, qualifications, and experiences. All the interviews were recorded, and all except one took place at the ESPC. To create a non-threatening atmosphere, I started the interview with the bio-data, which were not recorded, followed by "the story of learning and teaching writing". The story-mode type of question triggered reflection and nostalgic feelings on the part of many colleagues. All were interested in talking about their experiences as learners and teachers and took the opportunity to assert their identity, individuality, and potential.

In interviewing my colleagues, I did not act as a detached researcher. I was careful, however, not to be judgmental or evaluative but subconsciously linked the "stories" to my experiences and literature readings. In line with the humanistic and reflective approaches to TD (Rogers 1951 and 1980; D. King 1983; P. King 1983; Edge 1992; Underhill 1989 and 1992), I tried consciously to be a "good listener", to check on my understanding of teachers' meanings, and to watch and evaluate my

questioning technique and interpersonal skills. In eliciting retrospective information about in-service activities in which the interviewee and myself had participated, the interview became a collaborative endeavour to retrieve information from memory. Moreover, whenever I sensed that the teacher was worried or uncertain regarding participation in the project, I intervened and explained how the project would "serve us all". I tried to be persuasive and encouraging but not imposing. In case of uncertainty, I made it clear that the "final decision" was not required in the interview but by the end of the research period, giving the teacher time to reflect and ask questions.

Appendix 2.2 shows the interview list. It has nine sections, the headings of which are presented in Box 2.2. Several new questions emerged in the process of interviewing, and, others were abandoned because they were inappropriate or irrelevant. Modified versions were used for interviewing the administrators.

Box 2.2 Main themes in the baseline teacher interview

A. Personal and professional profiles
B. Attitude to and experience in learning and teaching writing
C. Conceptual knowledge and awareness of writing methodology
D. Training/development ...
E. View of self, collaboration, initiation, reflection, etc.
F. View of responsibility and accountability
G. Attitude to innovation
H. Beliefs and values in relation to team work
I. Other relevant issues

Teachers' interview responses provided a rich source of evidence to substantiate project relevance and viability on the perception level (see 2.5.1.1, 2.5.1.2, and 2.5.2).

2.4.2.2 Student Group Interviews

Students are the target beneficiaries of TD projects, and in ESP in particular their perspectives of their needs and wants are needed to substantiate relevance and viability (see Kennedy 1985 and Partington 1993).

Group interviewing is mentioned in the literature, and both advantages and disadvantages are discussed Fontana and Frey (1994) point out that group interviewing "is an option that deserves consideration because it can provide ... a perspective on the research problem not available through individual interviews (p. 364). The writers describe group interviews as "data rich, flexible, stimulating to respondents, recall aiding, and cumulative and elaborative ... (p. 365). One problem which they point out is the difficulty of obtaining "responses from the entire group" (p. 365). I dealt with this by asking students to raise their hands to elicit their responses to controversial issues. I was aware, however, that this was not an ideal method for obtaining "honest" student responses in view of group pressure and teacher authority (more later).

Student group interviews were carried out both at the Centre and outside of it. Off-site student group interviews were suggested by the on-site ones. The ones at the Centre were a 15-20 minute question-answer interaction between the students and myself, following video-taping part of the APP session and my classroom observation of the same class. This interaction was audio-taped and purposefully conducted in the presence of the classroom teacher and, often, another colleague. I wanted the teacher to act as monitor and observer of the interview process to overcome fear of evaluation on her/his part and to generate trust in the project and its initiator. For this reason, the data were analysed immediately, and the findings were passed to the teacher monitors the following day for validation. Appendix 2.3 shows a validation sheet and section 2.5 gives more details on data analysis.

In the process of student group interviewing, it was observed that students were not at ease in expressing their views in the presence of their teachers. In two cases, the teachers (both experienced) intervened and adjusted students' responses in

ways that would fit their own beliefs and values or perhaps the impression they wanted to give the researcher. This influence of teacher authority suggested the idea of off-site student group interviews at a University teaching hospital. I gained access to the hospital with the help of two senior medical students, who were following courses at the Centre.

The hospital interviews with a random sample of ex- and current students proved useful in probing students' "real" needs, beliefs, and expectations. They provided information similar to and different from that obtained at the Centre in teachers' presence. They were recorded and conducted in Arabic in order to get students' genuine responses and meanings. My two medical students companions proved to be invaluable. They took me around to six different departments, and I was, therefore, able to talk to many students, both individuals and groups. It all depended on the Department and type of work in it. For example, at the Internal Medicine Department, one of the largest, I met the students in groups as they came into the Head's Office to sign on or off. The Head, a senior student, was allocated the responsibility of supervising and organising juniors' work. Section 2.5.1.3 reports the main findings of the student group interviews, both the Centre and hospital ones.

2.4.2.3 Survey Questionnaires

Survey questionnaires are widely used in research for different purposes, including investigation of beliefs and attitudes (see Henerson *et al.* 1987; Oppenheim 1992). Three were used at this early stage for specific purposes:

(a) The **Pre-Report Questionnaire** was used to investigate specific teachers' beliefs and attitudes that related to innovation before the MA report presentation. The aim was to find out whether teachers' beliefs and attitudes would be influenced by the MA report. This, I believed, had implications for project relevance and viability (see Appendix 2.4).

(b) The **Post-Report Questionnaire** investigated teachers' response to the MA report, mainly its credibility, and the degree of relevance and applicability of the MA study recommendations (see Appendix 2.5).

(c) The **Area(s) of Interest Questionnaire** was a survey that aimed at finding out participants' preferable areas and manner of contribution to the project (collaboratively, individually, etc.). The need for this survey emerged as it became evident that the teachers would not be able to contribute in similar ways because of differences in their experiences, circumstances, motivation, etc. (see Appendix 2.6).

2.4.2.4 Documents

Documents are basic sources of data, particularly if innovation is involved (Kennedy 1988). I applied formally, in writing, and specified what I needed to review. All the documents requested except those related to "evaluation" (of courses, materials, teachers, etc.) were made available. The ones reviewed were:

- workshop and seminar files (1980-1996)
- recent staff meetings files
- course documents: syllabuses, in-house teaching materials, textbooks, etc.
- Board of Foreign Language Centres meetings file
- Med-Campus Teacher Education Project (1995-98) completed application.

2.4.2.5 Final Meetings and Signing up

Final meetings were essential for planning the next stage with the administration and teachers. The Director was confined to bed for a substantial part of the baseline research period because of a sudden accident. In spite of her medical condition, she agreed to meet me in order for us to hammer out a future plan and agree matters before my final meeting with the teachers. She also consented to my recording of the meeting/interview with her. Appendix 2.7 is a transcript of that interview in which

terms and conditions were discussed, and section 2.5.1.1 reports the relevant findings (see also 2.5.2 on teachers' needs, including the Director's perspective).

On 13 June 1996, one day after interviewing the Director, the final staff meeting took place. In it, I re-clarified the aims of the TD project and was clear about its requirements in terms of time, hard work, and commitment. I also pointed out and justified two other important things: (a) project methodology and (b) expected benefits. These need to be presented here in full because of their importance and implications for immediate and eventual teacher commitment. The section on project methodology reads as follows:

> **Methodological Approach**
>
> the project needs to be carried out in the form of action research. This type of research has been found to be of great benefit to teachers, students, and the whole institution. Previous research at the ESPC has proved this. ...

As for project benefits, they were expressed as follows:

> **Usefulness of the Project**
>
> It is my belief that this project will be useful in many ways:
>
> 1. It will help to broaden and reinforce our knowledge of ourselves, our learners, our context, writing, learning and teaching writing, and research methodology. It is an optimal opportunity for learning in the case of teachers who want to proceed to higher studies and for those who want to develop their potential as teachers of academic writing.
> 2. It will help us develop our writing curriculum in a way based on research.
> 3. It will reveal many potential areas for future research at the Centre (or even in the wider context).
> 4. It will provide material for teacher researchers to participate in conferences.
> 5. It will encourage the teachers to write for publication and contribute to knowledge.

Following the report, I urged the teachers to ask questions before signing up and

committing themselves:

> ... if you have any questions, please ask them before you sign up for the project. This signing up is what is usually referred to as ethical code. The project requires not only hard work but, most importantly, commitment.

Appendix 2.8 shows the full report, including details on project activities and requirements.

In the next section, I explain how the baseline data were analysed and present the findings related to the two Baseline Phase research questions (see 1.7) that focus on the issues of relevance and viability, with particular emphasis on the teachers' needs.

2.5 Data Analysis and the Main Findings

In line with the overall research orientation and methodology described in this chapter and elsewhere (see Chapter 4), interim data analysis (Huberman and Miles 1994; see 4.4.6) as well as end of stage/phase analysis were needed for the purpose of reporting to the participants. Since the baseline data were extensive, looking for information relevant to the aims and questions of research was necessary, and conceptual mapping through listening and re-listening to the taped interviews was needed to form an overall picture of teacher needs (see Jones 1987). Moreover, as field work was in progress, I transcribed and analysed **current** students' group interview data (2.4.2.2), and findings were passed to the colleagues who had monitored the interviews. In case of disagreement or uncertainty, the tape was checked by the teacher-monitor(s). Uncertainty was expressed once, and the monitor agreed with the "conclusion" after listening to the tape. Overall, the teachers responded positively to this feedback and validation strategy, so I decided to use feedback as TD and research strategy in the Main Phase.

In-depth interviews and off-site student group interviews were fully transcribed in the follow-up period and a more rigorous analysis was carried out, looking for evidence of relevance and viability. Data from other instruments complemented or

validated interview findings. Evidence was overwhelmingly supportive of project relevance. Viability, however, was only satisfactory in view of the enormous contextual constraints, particularly those of time and teacher overload. Evidence presented in the following sections relates to the main participants in the baseline research: the Director, the teachers, students, and key contributors in the wider University context. My main focus, however, is the teachers' voices and concerns since they are the main party in project implementation, and the project is intended primarily to serve them. There are two main sections: (a) indications of relevance and viability and (b) the teachers' needs.

2.5.1 Indications of Relevance and Viability

2.5.1.1 The Director's Voice

The Centre Director approved the research proposal and agreed to give the project time, space, and material incentives (see Appendix 2.7, section E). She described her role in it as "consultant" and "internal supervisor" and expressed her desire to monitor things "tightly". Asked whether she was willing to give the teachers who would carry out action research freedom to manipulate the reading component to serve writing, she said:

> This is a very, very sensitive question. I am not against manipulating the Core in accordance with research findings, but sometimes if it is not organised, each teacher will do what he/she likes and it will be chaotic. So this has to be very well organised and highly and tightly controlled (Interview).

This answer was expected in view of her concern about the Centre and its reputation. As we have seen in Chapter 1, she has been in charge of its affairs since 1985 (see 1.4.2).

Another expressed desire on the Director's part was that the main findings of the research should be reported to the "subjects" in the process of implementation:

> **Sada**: Do you mean that I should tell the teachers about everything?
> **Director**: I do not mean your specific findings but the overall ones.

> You'll be having two types of research: overt, teachers' research, and covert, your research. ... when I did mine, I did not discuss it with you because I thought this would spoil the whole thing if you knew I was observing you. After I started my PhD research, things have changed.

This answer relieved me and made me worry at the same time. I was relieved because reporting the findings to the participants is a basic principle and strategy in the AR methodology I had in mind (see 4.3.4 and 4.4.6). I was worried because I was aware of the Director's belief in covert research, as evident in the extract above. She had been trained in this tradition by native experts when a counterpart (see Holliday and Cook 1982: 17 and section 1.4.6.1). However, I took her awareness of the fact that "things have changed" as positive and invested hopes in its implications. On the whole, the Director was supportive to the project and approved most of my ideas and suggestions. For example, she agreed to give the APP teachers who would carry out AR some material incentives and showed understanding of their overload:

> I know how much work they do. Last year when I taught the APP to a group of dentists, for two months I allocated three hours every afternoon to the students.

> We don't here have this policy of rewarding the teachers materially, but I think all of them know that one day ... they will be rewarded. ... We can give them two hours a week for the research ...

Moreover, she agreed to provide the teachers with moral incentives. Following my in-depth interviews with 20 teachers, I have concluded that one of their basic needs was encouragement and appreciation (see 2.5.2.1; 2.5.2.3; 6.3.1.1; 6.4.1.1). For this reason, I suggested the idea of "letters of appreciation" that could be added to the active participants' professional files:

> ... of course, we can do that, but I don't know whether they consider this an incentive. In the Western culture, it is. But I don't want to reward people who participant on the face of it. I want people to be really active in the research, not just going through the motions, attending meetings and so on.

In my last meeting with the teachers, I told them about what we had been promised if we carried out research and took things seriously. All of them said they were not after "money", but were excited about the idea of "letters of appreciation".

In short, the Director's positive response to the project was crucial in marshalling support for it. According to Adams and Chen (1981: 267), this is significant:

> *The initial acceptance of an innovation is a function of the relevant power that can be marshalled in its support. The greater the relevant power, the greater the likelihood of acceptability* (italics in original).

2.5.1.2 The Teachers' Voices

There is substantial evidence in the baseline data that indicates the ESPC teachers' positive response to the project. Among them, the following are significant:

- response to the MA report
- signing up for project activities
- Beliefs and values
- commitment

a) Response to the MA report: The teachers' positive response to the MA report signifies relevance and viability of the project. All 12 who attended my presentation and responded to the Post-Report Questionnaire (see 2.4.2.3) believed that the findings were credible. Three selected "Completely" and nine "To a large extent". Their reasons for believing so were variant. Here are three responses from experienced and novice teachers:

> - Because they are logical according to the data collected and because we trust your professional credibility. (Jihad)
>
> - It [the study] was done by an expert teacher who is also an insider ... (Hind)
>
> - Most of the people asked would say their honest opinion, especially if it is

for a research and for a friend. It is very important that the interviewer should have a kind of friendly relationship with the interviewee, so that they'd be willing ... to speak freely. (Suhair).

b) Signing up for project activities: Out of the 16 teachers who responded to the Area(s) of Interest Questionnaire, the majority signed up to contribute to workshops and oral presentations and expressed their willingness to do their best to achieve project aims. Additionally, fifteen selected "Yes" for undertaking action research and writing a conference paper (see Table 2.3 a, b & c).

Table 2.3: Area(s) of Interest and Manner of Contribution (No. 16)

a) Area(s) of Interest

Area(s) of Interest	No. of Cases
Workshop/seminar on action research	10
Workshop/seminar on evaluation	10
Oral presentations of published articles/papers on writing	9
Social activities	10
Photocopying	6
Library-related activities	4
Video-audio taping	2
Typing	2
All activities	4

b) Manner of Contribution

Manner of Contribution	No. of Cases
Individually	3
Collaboratively with a leading role	1
Collaboratively with a minor role	2
Any manner ('I'm flexible')	10

c) Action Research and Writing

Action Research		Conference Paper	
Yes	No	Yes	No
15	1	15	1

c) Beliefs and values: A majority of the teachers responded positively to statements in the interview list (see Appendix 2.2, section H) that had the dual purpose of research and development (awareness raising). Nine of the statements with which **all** 20 teachers agreed (many strongly) appear in Box 2.3.

Box 2.3 Teachers' beliefs about collaborative research

1. Adherence to the agreed code of ethics is essential for the success of team research.
2. Research reports should include accurate description of what has happened.
3. Working in a research team is a process of learning.
4. Teacher researchers should observe and document not only their students' learning behaviour and style, but also their own teaching behaviour and style.
5. Errors in research should always be acknowledged.
6. Classroom research should be considered in teacher assessment/evaluation.
7. Headteachers play an important role in the success or failure of teacher research.
8. It is natural to say "I don't know/not sure" if one is uncertain about something.
9. Cooperation with one's research team serves the integrity of the research.

d) Commitment: Commitment is one central characteristic of action researchers (McNiff 1988; see also 3.5.2.1). The majority of the Centre teachers showed evidence of commitment to their students and the Centre (see 1.4.1). Moreover, many expressed their desire to learn. Enthusiasm was high, particularly among the novices, many of whom expressed eagerness to improve in ways similar to Ola's:

> The main thing is that I want to be a teacher, and I am taking it seriously. I am not thinking of doing any other kind of work; so I try to be as good as possible (Interview).

In short, the baseline research provided ample evidence to suggest that the Centre teachers were genuinely positive. The fact that the majority signed up for the project voluntarily is highly indicative of project relevance and viability. People cannot put on a face that is not theirs for six weeks (the baseline research period), and positive responses cannot be forced on teachers. Fullan (1991: 106) asserts teachers' sensitivity

to genuine initiatives (or otherwise), saying: "teachers know when a change is being introduced by or supported by someone who does not believe in it or understand it".

2.5.1.3 The Students' Voices

Like their teachers, the majority of students responded positively to the research and the initiatives of change in APP pedagogy. The **current** Centre students felt that the APP component was the most challenging in view of their overall weakness in English, particularly in writing. Overall, they expected their teachers to guide them sympathetically through the process and appreciate the fact that the time factor (theirs and that of the course) greatly influenced the quality of their projects, the product. They wanted their teachers to inform them how to write in English and correct their errors, and many praised their teachers for doing their best. The majority of medical students welcomed the idea of team writing, believing that collaboration would benefit them personally and also their research projects. Those in other courses, on the other hand, believed that that team writing was good in principle, but it was viable only in the case of medical students, who normally lived and worked together on a day-to-day basis.

As for the students I interviewed at the hospital, the majority expressed dissatisfaction with the way their course was timed and taught. Students took the opportunity of my visit as a Centre teacher-researcher to voice their concerns in general, and I collected valuable data for future use. The main aims of my visit, however, were (a) to form an idea about their main problems in APP writing with particular reference to teacher role and (b) to assess their response to "team writing", my MA study recommendation, away from teacher influence and authority (see 2.4.2.2).

The majority of medical students I talked to during my hospital visit expressed dissatisfaction with APP pedagogy. Among the problems they pointed out, plagiarism ("copying" or "cheating", in their words) was top of the list (see also Daoud 1995b).

In one ex-student's view, collaborative APP writing would limit "these practices":

> ... the APP fulfills many of the ESP course objectives. But as I have noticed, students either write word for word from references or copy papers written by previous students. That's why APP writing loses its importance; the aim of writing is not achieved. Team work could be effective in limiting these practices.

Two other students, who had followed compulsory courses at the Centre and were at the time following optional ones, commented on the APP-based interview or "viva" (see 1.4.3) and on teacher feedback practices. The first said:

> A 10-minute oral interview is inadequate in judging students' fluency and language ability. The student might be in a very difficult mood at this time.
> He could be tired because he was on duty the night before. The exam itself affects performance.

She added:

> ... the only time our APPs are discussed thoroughly is in the oral interview ["viva"]. During the course feedback is often done by 'correspondence'. I write, and the teacher returns my writing to me with some comments. Discussing the APP with the teacher in the process helps more than 'correspondence'.

The second student pointed out the problem of oral presentations, which are based on APPs and are given once, if any, in the whole course (see 1.4.3). He also offered a suggestion:

> Only one chance is given to the student to give an OP. It should be more frequent ... every ten days, if possible. We understand well when we listen, but we need more practice in speaking. We lack fluency. All students feel this.

With the exception of one ex-student, all those I talked to (about 25) believed that team writing was useful and practical in their case. They mentioned different reasons that reflected their understanding of research, e.g., increasing the number of case studies of the same disease, giving more reliability to research findings. The one student who opposed the innovation was one of my best students in a previous course. He

said:

> Frankly, I am not with the idea. Writing is a personal activity. It is difficult to find three students who have the same ideas and style of writing. As for saving time, the time we used to spend on the APP was relatively not long compared to the total time we spent on the course.

Students' major argument about their ESP course can be represented by the following view expressed by an ex-student from the Internal Medicine Department in the presence of about ten of his colleagues, who agreed fully with what he said:

> The aim of the ESP course is to meet our needs. Our needs centre on listening and speaking, and these two skills are given the least attention. ... Many of the things teachers spent time on were not interesting to us, and we used to feel bored and sleepy in the sessions.

The speaker gave an example to illustrate changes in students' needs and priorities:

> There was a conference on open heart surgery a week ago, and there were many foreign consultants. We felt the need to speak and discuss things with them. We couldn't do that effectively.

Students' argument here is for putting more emphasis on the oral presentation aspect of the APP component (reporting their research and discussing it with their peers and the teacher), as this will improve their speaking and writing skills. Similarly, many criticised their course emphasis on reading, saying "We don't find difficulty in reading; all the exams we take in preparation to go and study in the United States depend on reading, and we score highly".

These medical students' maturity and arguments astounded me. Though all my research before the present study had centred on the medical course (being involved in teaching on it), it was the first time I met them for research purposes outside of the Centre. The difference in the place of data collection appeared to be of great importance in providing evidence that was inaccessible at the Centre. The details they confessed about plagiarising, for example, had not been so well articulated in my previous studies. Moreover, ex-students proved to be valuable sources of evidence.

Those had passed their exams and received their ESP certificates and were, therefore, speaking out of genuine care for their juniors, for whose training they were made responsible. This explains their interest in the research. Many urged me to recommend that the ESP course should come "before", "not during", postgraduate study in order for it to achieve its objectives. They claimed not having time for it because of the demanding nature of their work and specialist courses.

The baseline study has indicated that teacher action research in ESP contexts is much needed. Elsewhere, I have argued this point (even before I conducted my hospital
"tour") quoting West (1994: 79):

> While both learners and teachers may have a full and clear picture of needs at the start of an LSP course, it is inevitable that priorities will change as current needs emerge. Regular and on-going re-analysis of needs is therefore needed if an LSP course is to meet the requirements of all those involved - learners, teachers and sponsors.

"West, therefore, stresses the importance of using research methods which can take account of changing needs. These methods are almost identical to those action researchers usually use ..." (Daoud 1996c: 84).

In refining the study design, medical students' views, needs, and expectations were high on the agenda. They influenced my choice of TD materials and activities. The discussion circles, feedback, progress presentation, etc. were all needed by those students, and, by implication, their teachers. All were integrated into the CAWRP design and methodology, hoping for their natural transfer from TD pedagogy to classroom one. This is also in line with the "Practice what you preach" maxim (see 3.4.2.3) and the principle of "appropriate methodology" (see 4.3.3).

2.5.1.4 The Voices of Teachers' Teachers

Voices from the wider context were valuable as well and added to the effectiveness of the study design. As I have mentioned in section 2.4.2, two English Department teachers were frequently mentioned by the novice teachers in the interviews for their

influence on them and their learning of writing. Therefore, I decided to interview them and learn from their experiences. Both consented to using their real names in the hope that their voices would be heard. Disappointment was evident in their interview data. Dalbani, whose PhD research was on teaching writing (Dalbani 1992), told a "painful" story of her attempt to innovate in her Department:

> This is the fourth year of teaching since I got my PhD. It hasn't been easy putting into application what I recommended in my thesis. .... One of the most important things I've found is that it is difficult to cooperate with others to introduce changes. I tried several times, but unfortunately colleagues were not responsive.

Almost the same story was told by Ahmad, Dalbani's colleague, who had been trying since his return from the UK in the late 1970s to introduce some changes in the way "we approach our students and teaching problems", apparently with little success. Both lecturers mentioned finding consolation in their students' cooperation and receptivity to new ideas. In Ahmad's experience, "Working in such an environment is not impossible but challenging to the creativity of the teacher". He emphasised teacher role in initiating change, saying that "the teacher has to establish his or her own 'university' in the work place". In his view, "this is the only solution at present".

These two interviews were educative to me. They provided additional perspectives and helped in framing context needs and potentials and the strategies needed to support the introduction of desired changes in TD and classroom pedagogy.

In the next section, the focus is on the ESPC teachers' needs as identified mainly through the in-depth interviews, that is, teachers' stories.

2.5.2 Teachers' Needs

2.5.2.1 "Stories" of Learning and Teaching Writing

There were many similarities in the interviewees' "stories" of learning writing. This is perhaps due to the fact that all have studied in the same system and graduated from one

department. On the whole,

- they were high achievers in English at school;
- they received little practice in writing at college in the first and second years because of large classes and related problems;
- they rarely learnt research paper writing in practical terms at college;
- they had negative attitude to writing in the first year at college and became more positive in the final two years; and
- they were autonomous learners of writing; they practised on their own and some sought help from competent peers and and/or seminar teachers.

A typical "story" is:

> I remember my college years very well because I had a lot of problems, especially in writing. When I was a first-year student, ... I became aware that I had a problem, so I asked my friends to help me correct my compositions. I will never forget this. I wrote 10 compositions in one month. ... (Shehab).

So the context was a big influence on those teachers' learning of writing. The challenges they met obliged them to look for alternative routes to avoid failure because writing was (still is) the only medium of evaluation at college.

As for their "stories" of teaching the APP, there were some commonalties identifiable in all the accounts. Individual differences seemed to relate to personality factors, work experience, and beliefs and attitudes. The common threads are:

- None has received pre-service training in teaching writing;
- Some have received inservice training, mostly in workshops and seminars, rarely in the form of self-study or education in an academic setting;
- They have learnt/are learning how to teach writing through trial and error;
- They are following a prescriptive step-by-step approach to teaching the APP;
- The vast majority have not experienced research, attended or participated in conferences, national or international; and

- Invariably, all, even the highly qualified and experienced, are suffering one way or another in teaching the APP component.

The teachers differed a great deal in their willingness to teach writing. Eight out of the 16 (50%) APP teachers interviewed said they felt proud of being APP teachers. This group would "always choose the APP given the freedom of choosing what to teach". The others expressed quite an opposite attitude, saying that they would not teach the APP were they free to choose. These differences appeared to relate to their views of themselves as teachers and did not seem to be much affected by the experienced/novice variable. Shehab, an experienced colleague, represents the first category and Hind (novice) and Khitam (highly experienced) the second:

> **Sada:** What does it mean to you to be an APP teacher?
> **Shehab:** I like it ... I am a good teacher, and the reason ... is that I am a good writer. Whenever I have the chance of choosing what to teach, I'll choose writing.
> **Hind:** A huge responsibility, a responsibility if I have the chance to run away from, I won't say no (laughs).
> **Sada:** Do you intend to write for publication?
> **Khitam:** Nooo!
> **Sada:** Why not?
> **Khitam:** I'm not an academic type, you know. I have never thought about it.

In my interview with her, the Centre Director talked about her teachers' reluctance to carry out AR and explained this in terms of their apprehension of writing. Her observation was substantiated in the interviews. For example, Hind, who had an MA in applied linguistics and was, therefore, expected to be more motivated than others, said in answer to a question on her willingness to research and write: "I don't know really. I haven't thought about it yet ... Writing was my best friend in the past, but now I prefer not to do it". She concluded: "Actually, I'm not willing to do it ...".

On the whole, context variables appeared to play a big role in demotivating the teachers to research and write. The Director commented on the course time constraint in relation to APP teaching in compulsory courses: "In the Hum and Sci-Tec they have two hours; they need six [and] in the Med, they have one hour; they need five. ...".

This course time constraint implied great strain on the teachers' off-duty time. To make up, they had to spend hours at home each week correcting and commenting

on APP drafts. This time varied a great deal, depending on the teacher's personal style of handling student writing and also on the level of the class she/he taught (see 1.4.3). According to the teachers' calculations, the time needed for supervising project work alone ranged between seven and 15 hours a week for an average class size of 15 students. This left the teachers little time for the other major components and minimal space to think of their own development. Covering the course materials and helping students to pass the end-of-course exam were their top priorities. Many said they would worry a great deal if their students failed because failure was taxing in terms of self-esteem for both teacher and student.

The Centre Director talked about weak students' problems. Her perspective was that the Centre and its teachers were responsible for their students' failure or lack of achievement but not entirely. She mentioned the responsibility of the education system at large and that of the students themselves, saying that little could be done in a three or six-month course to correct what had not been done right for ten or more years. She also expressed her perspective of a "solution" that would help weak students:

> If they don't know how to write a sentence, and if you can't go down to their level to help them produce an APP at the end of the three months, the only thing that can be done to solve this problem is to tell them to go and follow language courses elsewhere and then come back to us.

The majority of staff interviewed held views similar to that of the Director. Only a minority (Noor, Shehab, Ola, and Hind) saw things differently, believing that no student was hopeless. This latter group seemed to agree that students could be blamed only if learning and teaching opportunities were equally distributed and placed the responsibility for student lack of achievement on the teacher, student, and institution at the same time, particularly the teacher. They believed that teachers could do something to help the less competent earn their success by working hard.

In spite of the challenges of beliefs and conditions, several teachers, both experienced and novice, expressed their desire to read, research and write if

opportunities and time were available. Some were explicit about their need for guidance and encouragement. Enas, a prospectus teacher trainers, for example, said:

> I am the kind of person who likes someone ... to guide me if I don't know how to do things, or if it is the first time for me ... I can't tell if I am helping my students as much as I can. ... I might not be able myself to write an APP; who knows?

The motivation of this group of teachers to improve their practice made me believe that they would be highly receptive to the CAWRP in reality. They have proved to be so, as we shall see in the results chapters.

2.5.2.2 Awareness of Theory

One pervasive finding in the baseline interviews was teachers' lack of awareness of the nature of writing and of current approaches to teaching/learning writing. The vast majority were not aware ("never heard of") of the process and genre (or product) approaches to teaching writing. Evidence in the data is abundant to support the teachers' need for theory awareness. Asked "What approach is followed at the Centre for teaching APP writing?," Khitam, one of the trainers, and Rola, a novice, said:

> **Khitam**: What do you mean?
> **Sada**: I mean is it product, process, content, etc.?
> **Khitam**: Yes, I heard about these approaches during our training course in Leeds ... I don't know . . . if we are following any special approach ... We are interested in an academic piece of writing, aren't we? Maybe content? ... I don't know ...
> **Rola**: I have no idea.
> **Sada**: Have you ever heard of the process, product, content, etc. approaches?
> **Rola**: No, no! Never heard of these terms.

Moreover, the teachers appeared to be frustrated by the gulf between "theory" and practice. They mentioned receiving instructions in recent workshops on APP teaching on how to supervise students and teach them to be self-dependent in correcting their errors, using symbols and other techniques. All the teachers mentioned facing great challenges in implementing this "theory", and the main reason, in their view, was students' levels and lack of motivation. Sonia, among others, talked about

this theory-practice problem in response to the question: "How would you describe your role in the APP class?":

> **Sonia:** This is a question that no one has as yet found an answer to ... Really it is becoming funny ... because they tell us we have to be supervisors. How can you be a supervisor without interfering?
> **Sada:** What do you mean by "interfering"?
> **Sonia:** ... I mean correcting, marking, guiding"
> **Sada:** Aren't you doing so?
> **Sonia:** I *am* ... We are blamed to do so. ... I don't understand what they mean by "supervising".

Lack of awareness about theory and practice of teaching writing was also evident in some teachers' beliefs. Referring to a lecture on writing given at the Centre by Dalbani, (see Dalbani 1992 and 2.5.1.4), Sadik said:

> **Sadik:** She spoke about writing and that students need to write and then rewrite, rewrite, rewrite. I don't believe in this ...
> **Sada:** Does this ... affect your teaching?
> **Sadik:** Yeh; I reject rewriting. I don't ask my students to rewrite. I tell them right from the start that I want a fair copy immediately.

Another example of teacher beliefs comes from my interview with Hind, who is involved in staff development at the Centre. The question was about motivating adult learners. Hind said:

> I don't encourage my adult students . . . and I don't like the idea of motivating adults ... I don't know why. I seem to be more with the self-rewarded ideal. ... I tried it and felt it myself, so I want my students to do the same.

She mentioned that she had experienced the "self-rewarded ideal" in her recent MA course in the UK: "They [her MA course tutors] refused to teach me directly, saying that I should find out about it myself; this is how I learnt in the MA course". She said she did not like this approach, initially, "but I can appreciate it now, and I'm trying to train my students to do it themselves," she added. She also described her feedback

style:

> I tick it if it is okay. I comment only on the negative things but not negatively. I just tell them what to do. I write "accepted" for the good ones. I don't say it is good unless it really reaches a good level. ...

Hind seemed to believe that teacher encouragement to the learner was inconsistent with, even harmful to, self-motivation. As we shall see in Chapter Seven, these beliefs on Hind's part appear to have impacted negatively on her receptivity to the project and also on the Director's in view of the fact that Hind was the Evaluation Coordinator, and her reports were trusted (see 7.2.2 and 7.2.4).

Hind, However, was unique in her beliefs about motivation and motivating adult learners. The majority of the teachers I interviewed believed strongly in motivating students and saw an important role for the teacher in this concern. Shehab, for example, said:

> Writing is the key of success in our courses. Nobody is hopeless; we have slow learners and good learners. Students need encouragement. They need someone to advise and guide them.

In the course of my questioning to investigate the teachers' awareness of some necessary theoretical and practical principles in teaching writing, I discovered that the majority had problems with the concept of action research (AR). This was unexpected, especially in the case of experienced teachers, since we had received one or two workshops on AR in the past (see 1.4.6.2). Review of recent staff meetings files revealed the source of their confusion; they were asked to tell their students to carry out "real research" for their APPs instead of "library research" (believing, it seems, that library research was not "real research"). At the same time, they were required to carry out their own AR , apparently with little preparation:

> Action research: Tutors are requested to start their AR by choosing one point/problem area and working to solve it. T tries one solution, observes how it works. If it is successful, AR finishes at this point, but [if] it doesn't, T tries another solution, and so on." (Staff Meeting: 8/2/1996).

Teacher confusion over the concept of AR was pervasive. It can be illustrated by the following extract from an interview with Nada, an experienced colleague, who was involved in teaching medical students (see also 6.3.1.2 and 6.4.1.2 for other examples):

> **Sada**: You have mentioned that students' APPs are based on action research. What do you mean?
> **Nada**: As I told you, they have to make a case study or a questionnaire, case report, review ... It is called action research because it is real, true research. They tell us about their scientific experiments.

It was clear that the teachers were in need of support in order to familarise themselves with the basics of academic writing and action research.

2.5.2.3 Views on Collaboration

The teachers' views on the value of "collaboration among colleagues" for the purpose of TD was investigated through a five-point scale: essential, valuable, of moderate value, useless, very useless. All, experienced and novice, selected "Essential" or "Valuable". Novices were the most articulate in justifying their beliefs. Some of their reasons are: "teachers won't feel deserted"; "less experienced teachers need to ask the more experienced"; and "you need others and others need you". The teachers also believed that collaboration was more needed in ESP, particularly in teaching academic writing. Examples of their reasons are: "the atmosphere of compulsory courses", enormity of problems", "adult students", "lack of time", etc.

On her part, the Director believed that collaboration between the teachers and their students was "very satisfactory" but only "satisfactory" between the teachers. She also described and evaluated a phenomenon she had observed amongst the teachers - competition - and appeared to believe that it was something positive:

> Now there is something happening at the Centre, especially among the younger ones [teachers]. They compete. One says: I did so and so. ... The other would say "Why not me? She is not better than me. ... This is for the benefit of the students.

Five teachers, all experienced, expressed skepticism about the viability of teacher team work at the ESPC. They selected "Uncertain" or "Disagree" in response to the statement: "The current conditions at the ESPC are supportive of teacher team work". In contrast, all the novices selected "Agree" (Questionnaire). Hind's perspective, expressed in the interview, was diagnostic and articulate:

> It [collaboration at the Centre] is good, but it is not organised. This is a point I discussed in my MA. ... colleagues here are very, very collaborative, but I'd like to see this collaboration organized in the sense of organising learning by putting things in the hands of all.

As for receptivity to team writing, the pedagogic innovation, the teachers were divided on the issue. Eight APP teachers (50 %) believed it was viable in their classes, and the rest preferred the status quo. The majority of medical students' teachers supported the idea in principle and agreed to test it in practice within the framework of the CAWRP. This takes us to the teachers' stories of innovation at the ESPC.

2.5.2.4 "Stories" of Innovation

Change is an integral part of the Centre's history and function. Indeed, the Centre itself was an innovation (see 1.4.2). In 1991 an internal evaluation led by the Director was carried out to evaluate the different curricula and update the in-house materials designed by the KELTs in the mid 1980s. Several changes were introduced as a result, the main being in the length and intensity of the medical course from three months and 20 hours a week to six months and 10 hours a week. The teachers endorsed the innovation because the Director was keen on seeing it implemented. Moreover, in 1995 a language component was added to the syllabus of the Sci-Tec and Hum courses to upgrade students' level before plunging them into ESP materials (see Table 1.2 for students' level). This was implemented in the first trimester of the 1995-1996 academic year. When I was carrying out the baseline research (during the third and last trimester), the teachers were recovering from the effects of this innovation. The change impacted negatively on the already compressed APP time. According to Hind, it left

the teachers and students with only four weeks to learn research skills, read the literature, carry out their research, write it up, and present it for assessment one week before the exam. The teachers had to spend long hours at the Centre to help their students finalise their projects.

In the interviews, several teachers talked about that "horrible experience". Zeina, a novice teacher, mentioned that she "translated" one of her students' projects into English to help him meet the deadline. "What should I do?," she wondered. "They had to submit their APPs at such a time, and I had many students ... three weeks, and we were new teachers". "We didn't know anything about the APP," she added. Khitam, an experienced colleague, told almost the same "story", but she did not translate the APP for her "weak Hum student". "He translated it, and this made [her] angry," she said, "because he brought the Arabic version and the English version ... in very bad English". Students' results were unsatisfactory in the first trimester, and teachers and students complained, not only about the time constraint, but also the APP assessment criteria. For four years before this study started, the APP, the product, was not allocated marks in the exam and was used only as a shared ground for discussion between an examiner and the student in order to assess the latter's speaking skills for the end-of-course exam. This encounter is called the "APP interview". It is a simulation of a "viva" in real-life situations (see 2.5.1.3 for students' views).

Both teachers and students were restless, according to Hind. They wondered why the APP (the product) was not given any marks in spite of the enormous amount of work and time put in it. A decision was taken to evaluate the component and to run workshops for the teachers. New APP materials were compiled in a matter of weeks by the Director and Hind and assessment criteria were changed. The paper was given eight marks and the interview another eight (a total of 16 out of the 100 total marks for all exam component). The problem eased, but there was much to be done. "Teaching the APP is a pain in the neck," Hind said, and the same message was implicit in all that I heard and observed at the Centre during the six-week baseline research period. There was a general feeling of frustration and dissatisfaction. This might have

marshalled support for the CAWRP, the immediate aim of which was easing this "pain" through TAR, that is teacher education, according to Widdowson (1993: 266).

2.6 Implications for the Main Study

This section points out the main implications of the baseline findings for the main study. These come under three headings:

- Implications for the selected approach
- Implications for the study's scope and input
- Implications for the participants' roles and development

2.6.1 Implications for the Selected Approach

The baseline research has consolidated my belief in the value of TAR in EFL/ESP contexts for both TD and classroom innovation, not withstanding its challenges (see Daoud 1996c). Elsewhere in the educational world, this approach has been tested and its valûe has been substantiated for both TD and pedagogic innovation (see 3.3.1.4; 3.5 and Chapter 4). Kohonen (1992: 38), among others (see also Nunan 1989a and b; 1992a, b), points out that teacher education "can be achieved in school-based staff development projects that involve the whole staff, or at least most of the staff members" through experiential learning and TAR. Such programmes have many advantages, he says. They

> - ensure lots of face-to-face interaction and cooperation among the teachers;
> - extend over several years (2-5 years); and
> - are initiated by the participating teachers and based on the needs identified by the teachers themselves, rather than being imposed by external authorities.

He adds that because the teachers are "in charge of planning", they develop "an

ownership of their own learning" (*ibid.*). He, therefore, advises that

> - the general empirical framework is that of action research and experiential learning, involving a cyclic approach to the developmental projects: plan → act → observe → reflect → revise plans ...
> - they contain theoretical instruction, practical demonstrations, individual study, ... feedback ... and peer coaching. ... (p. 39)

Schecter and Ramirez (1992), writing about "A teacher group in action", mention other advantages of TAR, mainly "its contributions to both the teaching profession and the individual development of teachers". Teachers involved in AR, they point out, "become interested in and read the professional research literature, take leadership roles in their schools and influence" policy decisions (p. 192). The authors mention the National Writing Project (NWP) in which 45 US universities and six foreign countries are currently engaged in improving student writing through teacher development in the focus area, using the teacher-as-researcher approach (see also Nunan 1987, 1990 a, b, c, 1993, 1996 a, b; Burton and Michan 1993).

2.6.2 Implications for the Study's Scope and Input

In view of the needs identified through the baseline investigation, I decided to narrow the scope of research in the Main Phase in line with Hopkins's advice (see 2.2) and shift the focus from teacher development and classroom innovation as two equally important themes to teacher development as the major theme and pedagogic innovation as the minor one. Input, I thought, would need to come through individual critical reading of some of the literature that has influenced my MA study recommendations (see Appendix 2.9 for the suggested reading list), followed by group discussion of the ideas embedded in it (see Table 1.5 and sections 4.5.2 and 4.5.3). The focus should be on the process of teacher (and student) learning rather than its product. The aim is to promote "a holistic view of learning as ... education" for both teachers and learners (Kohonen 1992: 39).

2.6.3 Implication for the Participants' Roles and Development

Similarly, findings of the baseline research have implications for the roles of the participants involved, including that of the principal researcher. To achieve the aims of this study (see 1.6.2), it is essential for me to take a participatory role, working and learning alongside my colleagues, rather than on them (see 3.3.1). This role needs to be evolutionary, flexible, and responsive (Rossner 1992; Wallace 1992; Stake 1994, 1995; Tomlinson 1995; Tsui 1995 and 1996a, b).

The implication is that there are two types of AR in this study. The first is the teachers', and this is called (after Elliott 1991) "first order action research". Its focus is classroom pedagogy. The second is my AR, and this is described as "second-order". Its focus is the teachers, including myself, how we can be facilitated in maximising our potential and becoming the best teachers we can be (Underhill 1989; 1992). Our aim as teachers is very much in line with Hopkins's definition of teacher research (1993: 1) as

> an act undertaken by teachers, to enhance their own or a colleague's teaching, to test the assumptions of educational theory in practice, or as a means of evaluating and implementing whole school priorities. ... I am not envisioning scores of teachers assuming a research role and carrying out research projects to the exclusion of their teaching. My vision is of teachers who have extended their role to include critical reflection upon their craft with the aim of improving it.

My perceived role in this learning journey was to support and encourage learning autonomy at two levels: teacher and learner. This approach is in line with the theories of experiential learning and action research, which are consistent with Bruner's vision of instruction as "a provisional state that has as its object to make the learner or problem-solver self-sufficient ..." (Bruner 1966: 53; see also Holec 1981; Kent 1985; Dickinson 1987; and Nunan and Lamb 1996). Because the learners, both teachers and students, are educated adults, freedom to learn was perceived as essential (Rogers 1983).

2.7 Summary

This chapter has focused on the baseline research and reported its findings in relation to the two main research questions that aimed at substantiating the relevance and viability of the present teacher development project. Evidence presented suggests that the project is both relevant and viable in view of the fact that its idea and focus have been approved by the major stakeholders: administration, teachers and students. The findings helped to focus the study and decide on project materials and methodology, including a view of the researcher's roles.

The next chapter provides a review of relevant literature on teacher development and classroom innovation, focusing mainly on the action research approach to both themes.

CHAPTER THREE

Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

Chapter One introduced the study's motivation, focus, and context, and Chapter Two reported the findings of the baseline research and its implications for the main study. It has been shown that the teachers need theory, practice and research in order to become effective teachers of academic writing and to generate their continuous professional development (CPD). It has been postulated that teacher-initiated action research (TAR) can meet these needs. This chapter tries to explore the potential of TAR, but before it does so, it considers and evaluates relevance of other approaches to the needs of the ESPC teachers.

Part one of this chapter reviews literature on EFL/ESP teachers' needs, the challenges that face them, and the options open to them. The second part reviews some perspectives on classroom innovation, barriers to it, and ways of coping with these. Part three explores two current approaches to TD and throws light on their potential and shortcomings. The final part focuses on TAR, the selected approach.

3.2 EFL/ESP Teachers' Educational Needs

This section reviews current perspectives on EFL/ESP teachers' needs and issues that relate to their education. It shows that demands placed on ESP teachers in higher education are wider and inclusive of those placed on school-level colleagues.

3.2.1 EFL Teachers' Needs

Many native educators who have experienced EFL contexts in the developing world as teachers, teacher educators, or curriculum developers have written about the enormous constraints that face teaching and learning in such contexts. They mention severe lack of resources, untrained teachers and supervisors, very large classes, etc. (see British Council 1980 and 1981a, & b; Britten 1985 and 1988; Cross 1987; Bamber 1987; Hammadou and Bernhardt 1987; Bowers 1980, 1983, 1987a & b, 1990, 1992; Morris 1991; Phillipson 1992a & b; Holliday 1994; Lawrence 1995). Many have recommended holistic, humanistic, and experiential approaches to the education of EFL teachers, in which counselling is a basic component (e.g., Britten and Sow 1981; P. King 1983; Dove 1986; Gaies and Bowers 1990).

Medgyes (1994) addresses the needs of EFL teachers from the perspective of an insider. He compares the challenges facing native English speaking teachers with those faced by non-natives and finds enormous differences. Non-natives' "difficulties are ... daunting", he says (p. *x*). This, in his view, does not imply weakness; it is the very thing that motivates non-native teachers to "become better teachers on their own terms" (p. *ix*). His survey shows that non-native teachers suffer from stress, anxiety, overload, and lack of appreciation. He finds it surprising that these teachers have not received the attention of researchers:

> Seldom can we read about her fears and anxieties which may culminate in ... the Battered Teacher Syndrome ... Few studies have analysed the teacher as a person who hangers after self-actualization and 'caring and sharing' just as much as her students (p. 22).

To combat these problems, Medgyes (1994: 42-49) urges EFL teachers to find ways of coping and improving their situations and suggests several strategies that can alleviate feelings of inadequacy, stress and anxiety, strategies that, in his experience, can lead to improvement in the general well-being of the teacher. For example, he encourages teachers to "Admit it", "Speak out", "Open the safety valves", and "Find the right balance. In his view, "we can ... speak about positive anxiety, which is stimulating, energising, and focusing". Finally, Medgyes reminds his EFL colleagues

that one of the main characteristics of successful teachers is the ability to solve problems themselves by adopting a learning stance towards life. Like successful language learners, successful teachers make the best of available learning opportunities and learn autonomously.

Such accounts of EFL teachers' needs include but do not fully cover the challenges faced by ESP practitioners.

3.2.2 ESP Teachers' Needs

Numerous books and articles have been written on aspects of ESP theory and practice since the early eighties with learners and their needs as a central focus (see, for example, Widdowson 1983; Carver 1983; Jordan 1989; Johns 1990; Johns and Dudley-Evans 1993), but little attention has been given to the teacher. This is paradoxical, according to Richards (1997a: 115):

> ... in a field where an understanding of the target situation is centre stage and where the importance of the specialist is so clearly recognised, we have paradoxically excused ourselves from the very understanding which we insist teachers must develop if they are to be successful in the field of ESP.

The ESP "enterprise" is a vast field, "pluralistic", and "protean" (Robinson 1991: 1). Teaching ESP is, therefore, "a professional challenge", which requires "superior teachers" (Strevens 1980: 119). Two major sources of challenge pointed out in the literature are: (a) ESP teaching needs to be learner-centred, and (b) ESP learners are, in the vast majority of cases, mature and educated adults (see Beard and Hartley 1984; Bloor and Bloor 1986; Ramani 1988; Swales 1988; Brown and Atkins 1988; Hannant 1989; Hess and Ghawi 1997; Howard and Brown 1997; Johnstone 1997; Master 1997; and Howard 1997).

In methodological terms, these two sources of challenge pose a number of problems for ESP teachers, who are often literature majors. One of these problems is teacher knowledge of student specialism (see Bridges 1986; Cox 1986; Allen 1986; Dudley-Evans 1997; Ferguson 1997). To deal with this problem, Strevens (1988: 43)

advises ESP teachers to be humble and learn from and with learners and colleagues, saying that "ESP flourishes on the concept of team work ". Another problem is how to motivate overloaded ESP learners following compulsory courses. Motivation is particularly stressed in teaching writing (see Raimes 1983a and b; Flower and Hayes 1980; Flower 1993). Some argue for a liberating methodology (Brookes and Grundy 1988: 102) in the belief that adult students "will not be truly engaged in any ... activity which does not challenge them intellectually". A third problem that faces ESP teachers is learners' expectations (see Strevens 1988: 40-41; Bloor and Bloor 1988 and 1991).

3.2.3 Issues and Concerns in ESP Teacher Education

There was much debate over ESP teacher education in the 1970s and 1980s (see Strevens 1974; Swales 1980, 1981; Early 1981; Swales and L'Estrange 1983; Swales and Mustafa 1984; Kennedy1980, 1983a & b; Honeyfield 1983; Rivers 1983a & b; Mackay 1983; Abbott 1983; Adams-Smith 1986).

Ewer (1983: 10) classifies the major areas of concern that need to be considered in designing a course or programme intended to meet ESP teachers' needs, both pre- and inservice. These are: attitudinal" (not showing antipathy to science); "conceptual" (appreciating what science means and how scientists work); "linguistic" (being able to cope with "specialised lexis of different disciplines"); "methodological" (being aware that teaching adults differs "markedly" from teaching children); and "organisational" (being able "to cope with administrative problems"). Ewer's views stimulated extensive discussion of contemporary issues (see Vol. 2, No. 1 of *ESP Journal* for this debate). According to Master (1997), much of that debate is still relevant today.

Some commentators on Ewer's views touch on teacher-research issues. According to Jarvis (1983a: 45-48), ESP teachers need training in research methods and text analysis. Johns (1983), referring to her experience in training teachers in

China, mentions teachers' inexperience in reading and writing data-based research papers and points out the need to help teachers in these areas (see also Jarvis 1983a & b and 1987).

The debate over ESP teacher education continued with the publication of Hutchinson and Waters's *English for Specific Purposes* (1987). The main thrust of their argument is for a learning-centred approach to ESP which includes a view of the teacher as learner. They argue that ESP teachers "need ... to orientate themselves to a new environment for which they have generally been ill-prepared" (p. 157). The writers devote Chapter 13 to this orientation, recommending ways in which ESP teachers can make an easy transfer from EGP to ESP. They focus on two main points: teachers' need to acquire "new realms of knowledge" (pp. 160-64) and their need to improve their status. Regarding the latter point, Hutchinson and Waters mention the need of ESP teachers to be effective negotiators (p. 164).

Robinson (1991:79-96) also reviews literature on ESP teacher role and education. ESP practitioners, she points out, are expected to be researchers, administrators, course designers, material writers, testers, innovators, evaluators, and above all effective classroom teachers. In view of all these demands and responsibilities, she sees "flexibility" and "willingness to try new approaches and methods" (p. 96) as central in any approach to ESP teaching. She adds:

> Whatever the training that is given to an ESP teacher and whatever the situation, it is probably the case, as Strevens suggests, that 'becoming an effective teacher of ESP requires *more* experience, *additional* training, *extra* effort, a *fresh*, commitment, compared with being a teacher of general English' ... (Robinson 1991: 96; emphasis in original).

Although the debate was over what ESP teachers should know, be able to do, or how they should behave, and although it aimed at clarifying goals for the education of these teachers, there was something strikingly absent from it: the teacher's voice (see K. Richards 1997a & b). Cook and Seildlhofer (1995a: 9-10) comment on this flaw. They see that "for teachers, a feeling of direction and control may be crucial to self-esteem and job satisfaction ...". Teachers' "enterprise", they point out, "demands

education, reflection, and sensitivity", simply because teachers cannot "ignore the practical circumstances of what they do". Such comments reflect a shift in thinking regarding teacher involvement in the debate over their education.

3.2.4 The Situation in the 1990s

Several features indicate shifts in perspectives in the 1990s regarding language teacher education in general:

- Shift in views of the non-native teacher;
- Shift from training to continuous education or development;
- Emphasis on teacher research and the classroom as focus of change; and
- Emphasis on the teacher as the mediator of pedagogic change.

The first feature is a recognition of the status and expertise of non-native teachers:

> ... If one ... shifts attention from the language to the teaching aspect of language pedagogy, then it becomes apparent that non-native-speaker teachers can claim the greater expertise since their thinking and experience are directly related to local socio-cultural and educational conditions. In this respect, it is the insider who is the expert and the outsider the novice teacher (Widdowson 1993: 265).

The second shift is from training to continuous education and development (see section 1.2 for definition of terms). Working within this view, Lange (1990: 254-55) suggests a "general framework" for TD based on insights into the "characteristics" of the 21st century, which, he suggests, "will be knowledge-based", highly dynamic and fluid, and "people-oriented". Three of the six implications for TD he mentions are highly relevant to the context of this study:

> - Teachers will have to become facilitators, not repositories of knowledge. ...
> - Lifelong learning must be a construct in every teacher development program.
> - Experimentation, risk taking, autonomy, and flexibility must be key elements in the development of a model of schooling that places responsibility for learning on students, giving them freedom to try, test, innovate, and create.

Some of the features of the TD model Lange recommends, therefore, are "Field-based", "Problem-centred", "Experimental sharing", "Developmental", "Critical", and "open-ended" (p. 256). Lange's implications are relevant to the context of this study for the main reason that the teachers involved are language educators of highly qualified professionals (doctors, dentists, engineers, university professors, etc.). These students come to the ESPC with substantial knowledge of their disciplines and also with experience of the world. It would be illogical and inappropriate for us to act as transmitters of knowledge, language or otherwise (see 1.4.1 and 1.4.3). Instead, we need to treat our students openly as our equals in order for us to establish a learning partnership built on mutual respect and understanding that both of us can contribute, in different but complementary ways, to our personal and collective learning.

The third shift is characterised by emphasis on teacher research, and the importance of the personal, local, and global at the same time (see Breen 1986; Allwright and Bailey 1991; Bowers and Brumfit 1991; Brown 1991; Nunan 1992a and b; Edge and Richards 1993a; Kramsch 1993; Holliday 1994; Ellis 1995; Coleman 1996a & b; Freeman and Richards 1996a & b; Bailey and Nunan 1996a & b). In their "Preface", Richards and Nunan (1990b) summarise in six main themes the viewpoints expressed in their book regarding the situation of language teacher education in the early 1990s. Four of these relate to teacher research and the importance of local problems. Placing importance on the local, however, does not imply negation of the global. The term "global", though, has been redefined in the light of critical analysis and evaluation of current issues in language education (see Widdowson 1994; Phillipson 1992b). Many view "global" in a new light of mutual interests and interdependence rather than conformity and hegemony of one party over the other (see Holliday 1994; Abousenna 1994; Cates 1994; Wenden 1994; Henderson 1994; Daoud 1994c; Kaufman and Brooks 1996).

Finally, there is emphasis on the teacher as mediator of pedagogic change and encouragement for teachers to stand up for their rights:

> ... whatever proposals are made at the macro-level ... depend for their

> effectiveness on the interpretation by teachers at a micro-level of pedagogic practice and their abilities to carry out the proposals.... (Widdowson 1993: 260)
>
> So long as teachers are expected to accept a submissive and dependent role ..., it seems unreasonable to suppose that they will exercise a reciprocal mode of mediation in their teaching. Why should they allow a degree of autonomy to others when it is denied to themselves? (*ibid.*: 262)

These statements imply that teachers need to be well-informed in order to be effective innovators and negotiators. Since one aim of this study is to attempt to introduce classroom innovations, it is necessary to review briefly some current literature in this area.

3.3 Perspectives on Classroom Innovation

Two definitions of innovation are White's and Markee's. White (1993: 244) defines it as "a deliberate effort, perceived as new and intended to bring about improvement". Markee (1993: 231) sees innovation as "proposals for qualitative change in pedagogical materials, approaches, and values that are perceived as new by individuals who comprise a formal education system". Makee's description of innovation as "proposals", and her qualifying terms "qualitative" and "pedagogical" reflect the type of innovation in this study. In other words, the target area for improvement is classroom pedagogy. The change is proposed and negotiated, and since it involves change in people's thinking, attitude and behaviour, it has to be process-oriented.

Classroom innovation in this study is done through the teacher and as an integral part of the TD project. The next two sections clarify the nature of innovation and discuss main barriers and ways to deal with them.

3.3.1 Views on Innovation

There seem to be four current views on educational innovation: (a) as system, (b) as campaign; (c) as "interactive professionalism"; and (d) as teacher-initiated action

research (TAR). These are not exclusive; it is a matter of emphasis, which is obviously influenced by the who, what, where, why, and when of the innovation (see Markee 1993).

3.3.1.1 Innovation as System

The "systemic" view considers innovation a cultural entity, which holds knowledge, values, beliefs, attitudes, etc. This entity or system "invades" a host system with the aim of influencing it one way or another. The implication is that the innovator must seek ways to understand the host system with a view to controlling it (Stenhouse 1975). In our case, the system is the TD project, which often brings ideas from the BANA cultures to the TESEP one (Holliday 1994). Bowers (1983: 100) gives a good illustration of the systemic view. Describing the host system as a "'spider web' which is set vibrating by the attempt to touch it at any point", he lists about 60 questions to which expatriate ELT developers should find answers in planning their projects. These come under "personnel", "facilities", "funding", etc. (see also Kennedy 1987, 1988).

This view of innovation was dominant in the 1970s and 1980s and had great influence on the behaviour of expatriate ELT innovators in the developing world. Holliday and Cooke (1982) mention that they were warned by the aid agency (the ODA) to be careful in approaching the local system. As most ELT/ESP projects in the Third World were aid-funded, the experts were accountable to their sponsors and required to report back periodically and achieve quick results (White 1993). This might have created a good deal of anxiety on their part, resulting in their presentation of innovation as a very difficult mission which is bound to fail (see Swales 1980, 1989; Widdowson 1990, 1993; Holliday 1991a, 1992, 1994).

3.3.1.2 Innovation as Campaign

The second view of innovation is in the context of foreign language education (see Clark 1987). Depending on extensive experience in innovation in Britain, Canada and the developing world, Hamilton (1996) criticises the "systemic" view of innovation,

believing that it preserves the status quo and produces little change in schools. She believes that innovation is concerned with people, issues, and responsibility rather than material gains, ideologies, and accountability. Innovation in this view is perceived as a kind of "campaign"(p. 76), "propelled ... by passionate belief". "While conditions may be ripe for change," Hamilton argues, "it takes individuals with a vision to put something new in place". In her view, "This is not a role that can be taken by a 'manager' - it requires a leader" (p. 78). In this sense, innovation needs "the right people" (p. 136) who, in her view, possess characteristics that inspire others to act and improve their practice. They are willing to take risks and responsibility for their actions. She defines "responsibility" as "an attitude of mind" which "applies to our treatment of each other as much as to our treatment of our pupils" (p. 159). The main thrust of Hamilton's argument centres around discouraging dependency. Like Widdowson (1993: 262), she urges teachers to take charge and create "a dynamic of on-going professional development ... which belongs to them" (p. 11). This view seems to agree with that of Ellis (1990: 68), who describes innovation as "a process of negotiation, involving the teacher's overall educational ideology, the learner's expectations, and preferences and local constraints that determine what is feasible".

3.3.1.3 Innovation as "Interactive Professionalism"

A third view of innovation that can be of use to EFL teachers is suggested by Fullan and Hargreaves (1992a and b). They (1992a: 7) argue for providing teachers with "opportunity and ... encouragement ... to work together, learn from each other, and improve their expertise as a community". Based on deep analysis of a large number of studies in USA, Canada, and the UK, they identified several problems. Five exist in the context of this study: "Overload", "Isolation", "Untapped competence", "Narrowness in teacher's roles", and "poor solutions and failed reform" (see 2.5.2). To deal with these problems, the authors argue that solutions should be "collective and individual in nature" (*ibid.*: 2). They believe that collegiality and individuality are compatible: indeed, "they can and must go together if we want to improve our

schools". Their "message is about working together for improvement", that is "*interactive professionalism*" (their emphasis), which is the way forward "as we approach a new century". Within this framework, teachers are trusted and "allowed greater powers of discretion in making decisions ..." (*ibid.*) because:

> However noble, sophisticated, or enlightened proposals for change and improvement might be, they come to nothing if teachers don't adopt them in their own classrooms and if they don't translate into effective classroom practice (Fullan and Hargreaves, *ibid.*: 21).

Fullan and Hargreaves (1992a: 86ff) provide teachers with some guidelines for Action:

- Locate, listen to and articulate your inner voice.
- Practise reflection in action, on action, about action.
- Develop a risk-taking mentality.
- Trust processes as well as people.
- Push and support heads ... to develop interactive professionalism.
- commit to continuous development and perpetual learning.

These guidelines are particularly needed by EFL teachers for the reasons mentioned in section 3.2 (stress, anxiety, lack of self-confidence, etc.). EFL teachers need "interactive professionalism", which implies collaboration and participation. In the context of the present project, it means working *with* my colleagues in a participatory manner rather than *on* them as an expert or authority. Interactive professionalism implies collegiality. Writing on collegiality, Fullan and Hargreaves (1992a) point out that "There is nothing *automatically* good about [it]" because "People can collaborate to do good things or bad things or to do nothing at all" (*ibid.*: 14; authors' emphasis). They stress that collaboration means "creating a vision together, not complying with the head's own"(p.123). Their vision of a "fully functioning collaborative school" is one in which "many (indeed all) teachers are leaders" (*ibid.*: 70). These are "total schools", where "total teachers ... are most likely to emerge, develop and prosper" (p. 35). Such schools "value, develop and support

the judgment and expertise of all their teachers in the common quest for improvement" (*ibid.*).

Interactive professionalism seems an optimal approach if we have something relevant to interact about. Teacher research provides this relevance (see Rudduck and Hopkins 1985; Hopkins 1987a & b; Rudduck, 1985, 1988, 1995a & b; O'Hanlon 1996).

3.3.1.4 Innovation as Teacher-Initiated Action Research

The fourth view of innovation has been articulated by Stenhouse (1975: 69). He expresses skepticism about the systemic view of innovation, believing that it is concerned "with efficiency in the sense of value-of-investment" rather than educational "values". Instead, he argues for a process and research view of innovation, one that allows teachers time and space to experiment with new ideas in a systematic manner in order to test their relevance to them and to their learners. For him, "All well-founded curriculum research and development ... is based on the study of classrooms", that is, it "rests on the work of teachers" (*ibid.*: 143). Research in Stenhouse's view is good teaching. He, therefore urges teachers to turn their classrooms into laboratories and test" some major hypotheses of learning theory" (*ibid.*: 26).

Stenhouse's vision of curriculum innovation places great value on the teacher. He wants teachers to extend their roles, develop research curiosity and become teacher-researchers. In his view, this "extended professionalism ... is essential for well-founded curriculum research and development" (1975: 144). Teacher autonomy is "one essential characteristic" of "extended professionalism" (*ibid.*). He (1983: 163) describes teacher autonomy as intellectual, moral, and spiritual emancipation "which we recognise when we eschew paternalism and the role of authority and hold ourselves obliged to appeal to judgment". Extended professionals, in his view, are also (a) committed to learning and developing their expertise; (b) keen on studying their own teaching; (c) concerned about testing theory in practice; and (d) collaborative and

honest with themselves and others (1975: 144).

Stenhouse's view of innovation can empower teachers and students who will implement the innovation. Its aim is to enable teachers to evaluate their own performance through adopting a research approach to teaching with the aim of continuously improving their practice. In the field of EFL language education, similar process-research views of innovation have been expressed by many writers (e.g., Prabhu 1987; Coleman 1987; Nunan 1989a and b; van Lier 1988 and 1994; Underhill 1989 and 1992; Wallace 1991; Widdowson 1993; Richards and Lockhart 1994; Holliday 1994; Pennington 1995 and 1996a; Hedge and Whitney 1996). Though they have some differences in approach depending on their beliefs and the context in which they work, they all promote the central role of the teacher as a reflective practitioner and researcher.

Among these ELT experts, Allwright (1993: 123) advocates combining research, teacher and pedagogic development (see also Allwright and Bailey 1991). He terms this integration "exploratory teaching and learning", defining it as "exploring already familiar and trusted classroom activities". Allwright proposes seven criteria for integrating research and pedagogy: relevance, reflection, continuity, collegiality, learner development, teacher development, and theory building (*ibid.*: 128-29). He mentions three problems that face exploratory teaching and learning: (a) time constraints ; (b) the burden of learning new skills; and (c) threats to teacher self-esteem (pp. 129-130).

Stenhous's, Hamilton's, Ellis's, Fullan and Hargreave's, and Allwright's arguments are powerful and inspiring. One can feel their educational and ethical intents. Also, embedded in them is a "passionate" belief in the role of the individual teacher and her/his potential to take responsibility on moral grounds. I, therefore, subscribe to the view of innovation which is people-and research-centred. Awareness of the systemic view of innovation, however, is useful to EFL teachers. It can broaden their vision and strengthen their interpretations and analyses.

3.3.2 Barriers to Innovation and Criteria for Success

A number barriers to innovation are mentioned and discussed in the literature. Here I focus on four which are of relevance to the present study and include suggestions from the literature for dealing with them.

3.3.2.1 Psychological Barriers

Psychological barriers are grounded in human beings' tendency to stability and need for security (Maslow 1970, 1972). When teachers are asked to innovate, it means that they are asked to change or modify their beliefs, values, and established routines (Schumann 1994). They are likely to feel insecure and protective, and might reject the new ideas out of hand. Prabhu (1987: 105) makes the point that the threat is less serious if the innovation is a choice:

> If ... there is no compulsion to adopt new routines ... the sense of security is largely protected and teachers' existing perceptions may then begin to interact with the new one and to be influenced by it. (Prabhu 1987: 105)

Writers on innovation, therefore, stress the importance of voluntary participation and of involving the teacher in the decision-making processes (see Ellis 1990; Rudduck 1991; Sikes 1992; Wideen 1992; Stoll 1992; Hargreaves 1992a; Palmer 1993).

3.3.2.2 School Culture Barriers

Fullan and Hargreaves (1992a: 83) define school culture as "the way we do things and relate to each other around here". School cultures have been characterised as collaborative or balkanised or at some other point between the two polarities (see Hargreaves 1992a & b, 1994a, 1995a & b). Collaborative cultures are reported to be conducive to change (Fullan 1991) and are often associated with leadership styles. Weiss's study of 12 schools with and without teacher involvement in decision making

has come up with a surprising finding: it is not so much teacher participation in the decision making that effects change in schools as their opportunity to interact and discuss the new ideas so as to make them their own:

> People do not take new research findings or new ideas from journals and implement them. Rather, they have to engage in an interactive conversation around the new knowledge, assessing its promise and its limits and tailoring it to the unique conditions of the local setting (Weiss 1993: 88).

Thus, teacher dialogue and interaction is essential for introducing innovation in an effective manner (see also section 4.4.4; Kent 1985; Scott 1995; Bailey 1996).

3.3.2.3 Instructional Barriers

In introducing any innovation, there are new ideas, procedures, and techniques that need to be learnt, and the mode of learning adopted in the innovation process is believed to be critical. Many writers advocate the interpretative mode, whereby teachers gradually make meaning of the innovation through enquiry/discovery methods and experiential learning rather than transmission (Rudduck 1988; Maley 1991; Eraut 1994). Ownership, it has been argued, is the basis of shared commitment to change (Rudduck 1991: 30 and 91). Shared commitment builds on shared understanding, and understanding has cognitive and affective routes (Pennington 1995, 1996a and b). But teachers and learners as mediators of change "must struggle to understand the innovation" (Rudduck 1991: 67).

Wallace (1991, 1996) stresses the role of reflection as a mediator of change in EFL teachers' conceptual development (see 3.4.2.2). The majority have been brought up in a tradition of learning by rote, which is in sharp contrast to reflection. Wallace (1991: 54) argues for a reflective approach to training these teachers, believing that "fruitful change is extremely difficult without reflection" (see also Breen *et al.* 1989; Bartlett 1990; Wallace and Woolger 1991; Underhill 1993; Elliott 1993d; Stevenson *et al.* 1995; Pennington 1995, 1996 a & b; Tsui 1995, and 1996a &b).

3.3.2.4 Interpersonal Barriers

There is substantial evidence in the literature to suggest that "rationality" in the positivist sense has little to play in effecting change (e.g., Schumann 1989; Argyris and Schon 1996). Change has a strong affective and emotional dimension, and this is its main challenge (Shipman *et al.* 1974; Gaies and Bowers 1990; Cole 1991; Schumann 1994; Pennington 1996a & b; Shaw 1996; Sellars and Francis 1995; Shamim 1996). Interpersonal relationships mirror this internal struggle with the self and with others. Bowers (1983), Clark (1987), Holliday (1994), Hamilton (1996), and several others stress the role of "people", rather than "technology" and "theory", in effecting the desired change. Writing with reference to the project of Graded Levels of Achievement in Foreign Language Learning in Britain, Clark (1987: 136) identifies the main barriers to innovation in school-based projects and points out some ground rules for success:

> The two most important factors in school-focused curriculum renewal are the quality of relationships between participants and the sharing of responsibility. Education is about people ... and the most valuable contribution that a project leader can make is to ensure that the diverse strengths, energies, and personalities of those involved are harnessed and forged together harmoniously.

Clark goes on to argue for mutual responsibility within a democratic framework.

Action research with its ethical, and moral obligations can empower teachers to deal with interpersonal and other problems and introduce the innovation they desire (Noffke 1992, 1994; Stevenson 1991; Lomax and Evans 1996; Lomax *et al.* 1996).

3.4 Two Approaches to Teacher Development

So far in this chapter I have looked at EFL/ESP teachers' educational needs and the shifts in perspectives in relation to their education. I also considered four current views for classroom innovation, pointing out potential adaptation of ideas and strategies from three of them, mainly the action research approach, for the purpose of classroom innovation in the context of this study. I continue this review, turning next to current

approaches to TD.

As mentioned in Chapter one (section 1.2), TD is defined in this thesis as continuous professional development. Many approaches to it are discussed in the literature. These are described as "craft"; "applied science"; "reflective" (Wallace 1991); "evolutionary" (Stake 1987); supervisory (Gebhard 1990a and b); "touchstone" (Yaxley 1991); reflective mentoring (Tomlinson 1995); "interactive professionalism" (Fullan and Hargreaves 1992a); distance learning (Richards and Roe 1994); "self-directed" (Nunan and Lamb 1996); "teacher-as-researcher" (Stenhouse 1975); and "action research" (McNiff 1988). Though there is a great deal of overlap among these approaches, there seems to be little consensus as to which constitutes the optimal approach. For Richards (1990), this is "The dilemma of teacher education".

The applied science and reflective approaches are important for the main reasons that they are the bases on which the selected approach, TAR, has built and it is inclusive of them. To these two approaches are considered next.

3.4.1 The applied Science Approach

The applied science approach is believed to be the most prevalent (Wallace 1991; Richards and Rodgers 1986). It is associated with the heritage of positivism, which views education as applied science (Carr and Kemmis 1986: 35). Theory is generated by university-based researchers and academics and handed to the teachers in pre- and inservice courses. They are trained in how to apply it "correctly" (Ur 1992: 56) and are up-dated periodically in inservice programmes. Knowledge flow is "*one-way*" (Wallace 1991: 9): theory into practice.

Critiques of the applied science approach claim that it is anti-educational and "threatening" to teachers (Elliott 1991: 46). Practitioners, it is claimed, find a large gap between theory and practice (see Alatis *et al.* 1983; Bolitho 1984; Day 1993b: 224; Ur 1992: 57; Hargreaves 1994b). Many teacher educators, however, argue that a theoretical component is basic for teacher education (Brumfit 1983b; Stern 1983a & b).

Krashen (1983), for example, advocates acquainting teachers with different tested theories, believing that teachers educated this way will be better prepared to change and introduce changes:

> Without theory there is no way to distinguish effective teaching procedures from ritual, no way to determine which aspects of the method are helpful and which are not ... (p. 261).

Recently, there has been a call for dialogue between theory and practice and collaboration between teachers and researchers (see, for example, Ellis 1995; Richards 1996a & b). This kind of collaboration is needed in ESP contexts as argued elsewhere in this thesis (see 4.3.7; 4.4.3; and 8.6.1)

I tend to believe that the controversy over the theory/practice divide is not representative of EFL teachers, particularly those in the developing world. This is certainly true in our case in Syria, where the majority of teachers have not been trained or formally qualified in ELT (see 1.3.2; 1.4.4; 2.4.2.1; 4.5.2). Secondly, we do not have resources which give access to theory (see 1.4.2). Thirdly, little research has been carried out in EFL to substantiate teachers' responses or reactions to theory (see Lange 1990). My own experience of theory is different from what is reported in the literature about threatening effects and other negative reactions and agrees with Widdowson's view of its "incentive value" (1984). This does not mean "blind" application: one has to be selective and sensitive to the local context (see 4.3.2 and 4.3.3). I agree with the views of Ramani (1987) and Ur (1992, 1996) that applied science theory is needed as part of teacher education in general, but, in the final analysis, the valid theory is the one that works for the teacher in her/his classroom (see 4.3.7).

As it stands, this approach is inadequate for this study's aims because it views teachers as implementors rather than generators or evaluators of theory. On its own, it does not help teachers become effective in researching teaching. In order to do so, they need to carry out research and test and generate theory that works for them. In this process, they need to work in the light of some theoretical insights, but to apply

them with critical reflection (see 3.4.2.4; 4.4.5). Besides, the applied science approach is problematic for TD and classroom innovation because of its top-down nature (see 3.3.1.1 and 3.3.2.1; cf. 3.3.1.3 and 3.3.1.4).

3.4.2 The Reflective Approach

The reflective approach evolved as a reaction to the applied science approach. It has made real contribution to the field of teacher education but is not without problems and challenges.

The reason I am placing great importance on the reflective approach is my belief (after Wallace 1991 and my own experience) that no change can take place in the teacher or her teaching without critical reflection and evaluation (see 4.4.5 for details).

3.4.2.1 Origin and Underlying Philosophy

Dewey is believed to be a key originator of the term "reflection". As far back as the start of this century (see Dewey 1904), he perceived that teachers needed dual vision: long-range and short-range. The former relates to the long-term purpose of education, and the latter to the short-term purpose, the minute-to-minute decisions that have to do with teaching and learning. Later, reflection became a key theme in Dewey's work. He perceived it as deliberate problem-solving form of inquiry that requires intense thinking (Calderhead 1989; van Manen 1995; Hatton and Smith 1995).

Schon (1983, 1987) has also contributed to developing the concept of reflection. He challenges positivists' claims that knowledge constitutes absolute "truth", detached from human values and experience (1983: 34). For him, "technical rationality" does not fully account for all the quality decisions practitioners make in their day-to-day lives. He argues that many of the decisions or judgments practitioners make depend on their "tacit knowledge", which includes, among other things, knowledge of theory:

> Even when he [professional] makes conscious use of research-based theories and techniques, he is dependent on tacit recognition, judgments, and skillful performance. (*ibid.* 50).

Schon's theories of reflection have had great influence on teacher education in both mainstream and language education (see Hatton and Smith 1995).

The term "reflective teaching" is now often encountered, but it seems to mean different things to different people (see Boud *et al.* 1985; Gore 1987; Kemmis 1987; Smyth 1989; Valli 1990, 1992; Sultana 1995; van Manen 1995). Cruickshank, one of the pioneers of reflective inquiry, defines "reflective teaching as "teacher's thinking about what happens in classroom lessons, and ... about alternative means of achieving goals or aims ..." (cited in Bartlett 1990: 202). Bartlett (1990: 205) extends this view to involve critical analysis of matters beyond the classroom, ones that affect teaching and learning. For him, reflective teaching involves "critical reflection". He points out that "*critical*' "refers to the stance of enabling us as teachers to see our actions in relation to the historical, social, and cultural context in which our teaching is ... embedded". He encourages teachers to move away from the "how to" questions to the "what" and "why" questions (see pp. 206-13), and explains how such questions can lead to new understandings that have the potential to redefine and transform practice (see also Richards and Lockhart 1994: 4).

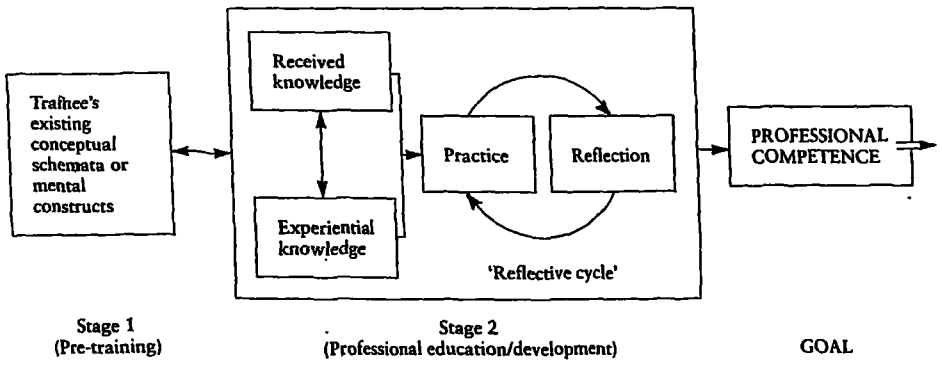
I believe that most teachers find themselves naturally critiquing conditions in the wider context and discussing implications for their work. But if this is done deliberately in TD programmes, this is another matter. It is not the aim of this study to include critiquing conditions beyond the institution, and it is up to the participants to critique institutional variables.

3.4.2.2 Reflective Approaches to EFL Teacher Education

Two reflective approaches that I have found useful for this project are Wallace's and Ur's. Wallace's *Training Foreign Language Teachers: A Reflective Approach* (1991) builds on Schon's work. It is addressed to "anyone in the area of foreign language teaching who is engaged in designing, running or taking part" in "teacher education courses, *especially in developing countries*" (p. 1; added emphasis). Unlike the applied science approach that puts great emphasis on the expert's "professional knowledge",

Wallace's reflective approach "deliberately highlights the trainees and what they bring" to the "development process" (p. 50). He mentions that teachers' "mental constructs" come mainly from personal, social, and cultural sources. Whatever the source, "it is vital,", in his view, to find out where the teachers are before proceeding to the second stage of professional development (p. 51). This stage includes "two kinds of knowledge development". The first is "received knowledge", which includes "vocabulary of the subject and matching concepts, research findings, theories and skills ... widely accepted as ... part of necessary intellectual content of the profession" (p. 14). The second is "experiential knowledge". This develops as the teacher acquires "knowledge-in-action" (p. 15) through practice and reflection on the newly acquired knowledge (see Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1 Wallace's Reflective Approach to Teacher Development



Source: Wallace 1991: 49

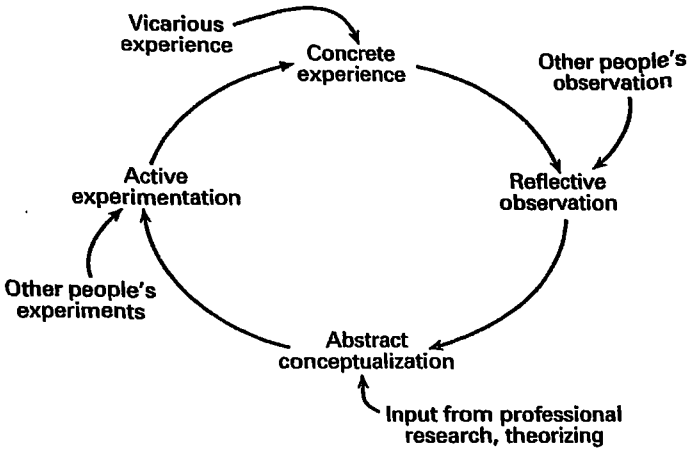
As Figure 3.1 shows, Wallace's approach includes a "reflective cycle", which he defines as "a shorthand way of referring to the continuing process of reflection on 'received knowledge' and 'experiential knowledge' in the context of professional action (practice)" (p. 56). Reflection may take place "'before the event'", during it (reflection-in-action), or after it (reflection-on-action). These processes are expected

to lead to "professional competence" (*ibid.*). Unlike the craft and applied science approaches, which focus exclusively on experience or theory (respectively), Wallace's reflective approach attempts to integrate theory, practice, and teachers' beliefs and values. He believes that reflection is essential for development (see also 4.4.5 and 4.4.6 for methodological implications).

The second model of reflective practice for EFL teacher development has been developed by Ur (1996). Ur, referring to Argyris and Schon's work, draws our attention to what is termed "espoused theories". She points out that "'Espoused' theories that are claimed by an individual to be true but have no clear expression in practice - or are even contradicted by it - are the foundation of the kind of meaningless theory that trainees complain about" (*ibid.*: 4). Espoused theories in the sense Ur's indicates here appear clearly in this study (see 5.2.2, for example).

Ur (1996: 6) has reservations about Wallace's reflective approach. In her view, it "can tend to **over**-emphasize experience" and "teachers themselves as almost the sole source of knowledge, with relative neglect of external input". External input (lectures, reading, and so on), Ur points out, "help to make sense of the experience and can make a very real contribution to understanding". The function of reflection, as she sees it, is "to ensure the processing of any input, regardless of" its source, "by the individual teacher, so that the knowledge becomes" her/his own. She terms this approach "enriched reflection", which builds on Kolb's theory of experiential learning (*ibid.*: 6-7). Figure 3.2 shows how this approach is perceived to work.

Figure 3.2 Ur's "Enriched Reflection" Approach



Source: Ur 1996: 7

As can be seen, this approach integrates external and personal sources of knowledge, both of which are mediated by cycles of concrete experience, active experimentation, critical reflection, and abstract conceptualisation. Theory generates from practice, not vice versa, and this theory is continuously checked and rechecked for relevance as people and circumstances change. In short, in Ur's view (*ibid.*: 7):

> ... the most important basis for learning is personal professional practice; knowledge is most useful when it either derives directly from such practice, or, while deriving originally from other sources, is tested and validated through it.

This view of teacher/teaching knowledge is very similar to McNiff's (see section 4.2), which is adopted for this study.

3.4.2.3 'Practise What You Preach'

I have found Wallace's maxim of "Practising what you preach" (1991: 18-19) useful for the aims of this project (see 1.6.2). It is based on his long-term involvement as an EFL teacher educator (see Wallace 1996). He reports that EFL inservice teachers "are ... critical of the standard of training they receive" because of mismatches between teaching and learning methodologies in their home institutions, on the one hand, and teaching and learning methodologies in academic settings abroad, on the other (for a similar observation, see Hedge 1987):

> It is ... taken as a truism that the teaching and learning experience in [a teacher education course] ought to reflect, *in an appropriate way*, the teaching and learning experience of the school that the trainees ... teach in. ... if it were thought desirable ... that teachers ought to be encouraged to become 'reflective practitioners', ... then ... a good part of their learning ... ought to be experiential in nature (pp. 18-19; and 26; his emphasis).

The ideas embodied in the above quotation were guiding principles in designing the CAWRP's methodology. For example, the communicative approach is the one selected for use at the ESPC. For this reason, I have tried to incorporate in project design many of the strategies this approach uses (e.g., discussion; see section 4.4 for details). Moreover, Wallace's philosophy agrees to a large extent with Holliday's (1994) "appropriate methodology" (see 2.3 and 4.3.3) and implies applying to oneself what one requires of the other (see Hunt 1987). For example, if I want my colleagues to adopt the AR approach to their development, I should adopt this approach in my own development (see 4.4.2; 4.5.2; 5.4.4).

3.4.2.4 Types and Levels of Reflection

Teacher reflection has been classified into types or levels by educators and researchers (see Zeichner and Liston 1987; Adler 1991; Gore and Zeichner 1991). Two widely

used classifications are van Manen's (1977) and Schon's (1983 and 1987). Van Manen's is based on Habermas's *Knowledge and Human Interests* (1971). He proposes a hierarchy of three levels. Starting with the lowest level they are: technical, practical, and critical reflection. In **technical reflection**, the teacher is usually concerned with efficiency in achieving certain prespecified ends, using prescriptive means. She/he does not usually question the ends or means. **Practical reflection**, on the other hand, questions both ends and means. The teacher recognises that meanings are not absolute but negotiated. Practical reflection improves practice through understanding it. **Critical reflection** has an emancipatory intent. It is the highest in the hierarchy and often includes elements of the first two types. The teacher questions not only the ends and means, but also institutional and social structures that affect learning. This type of reflection leads the teacher to find strategies for dealing with issues (e.g., injustice and inequality) in their classrooms and schools (see McTaggart 1996).

In using van Manen's (1977) classification, researchers tend to associate the lower level of reflection with beginning teachers, and the higher ones with experienced teachers. However, some have found this division arbitrary and hierarchical and disagreed with it (see Elliott 1993 a & b; Noffoke 1994, 1995). They believe that reflection cannot be assigned to categories, and that teachers, novice or experienced, can reflect across all these levels. The division researchers make, it seems to me, is a matter of convenience to report their findings, and it is not unjustifiable looked at from this perspective (see Day 1993b & c, for example).

The second widely used classification of reflection is Schon's (1983; 1987). Schon's incorporates all the types mentioned above into two kinds: reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. As we saw in the earlier discussion of Wallace's work, **Reflection-in-action** occurs during action. It is the most demanding and requires immediate intuitive judgment. **Reflection-on-action**, on the other hand, occurs some

time after the action has taken place and involves analysis followed by a decision for action. This usually leads to reshaping the situation in terms of the teacher's frame of reference (see House *et al.* 1989; Kroath 1989).

van Manen's and Schon's classifications, among others, seem to have influenced the design of some pre- and inservice teacher education programmes intended to promote reflective teaching (see Valli 1992). However, some programmes adopted radical lines with an emancipatory intent in the sense suggested by critical theorists (see Carr and Kemmis 1986). They have been criticised by some (see Hopkins 1993; Webb 1996b) and supported by others (see Zuber-Skerritt 1992a & b and 1996a & b). As I point out in section 4.2, a practical intent has been adapted for this study. But one cannot control teacher reflection. The teacher-researchers in this study reflected across all the types of reflection mentioned in this section (Chapters 5, 6, 7).

3.4.2.5 Potentials, Problems, and Ways Forward

So what is the potential of the reflective approach (or approaches) for teacher and pedagogic development? The literature reveals strengths and dilemmas. Strengths of the approach lie in filling in gaps in the applied approach: placing importance on the teacher as a person; on what the teacher brings to the education context (knowledge, beliefs, experience, etc.); on building on teacher potential; on trusting the teacher's ability to learn and continue learning; etc. In short, the reflective approach has great potential for teacher and pedagogic development, if administered "appropriately".

"Appropriately" is meaningful here. The reason is that many educators who have long experience in applying the reflective approach in the UK, USA, and Australia, have expressed some concern about its adequacy, practicality and appropriateness. Some believe that teaching is practical, concerned with solving problems that relate to the present. Reflection, on the other hand, is an abstract pursuit that extends to the past, present, and future. This might prove very demanding for overworked teachers, in general, and novice teachers, in particular (see Boud *et al.*

1985; Wideen and Andrews 1987; Kennedy 1993). Hatton and Smith (1995), Valli (1992), Hopkins (1993), and Day (1993b & c) express similar views, emphasizing the developmental nature of reflection and learning to teach in general. These writers tend to be cautious in putting great emphasis on reflection in the case of novice teachers or even experienced ones.

Other concerns relate to ethical dilemmas. For example, emphasis on reflection might be alienating and intimidating to teachers when asked to reveal their perceptions, beliefs, and values (see Hammersley 1993; Hatton and Smith 1995). Schon (1983: 69) himself admits that some professionals "feel profoundly uneasy because they cannot say what they know how to do, cannot justify its quality or rigor".

Another dilemma experienced mostly in multicultural and multiracial "democratic" societies is articulated in many papers in Elliott (1993a), Noffke and Stevenson (1995) and Smyth (1995a). It relates to ideological positions for or against using reflection as a vehicle for TD. For Zeichner and Gore (1995), the dilemma is how to reconcile two ethics: commitment to "caring" and commitment to "social justice". They believe that "both 'ethics' are necessary in the practice of teacher education" (p. 17) and recognise the tension in dual commitment. Should they influence teachers' reflection and direct it in the way they want to see it operating (which is manipulative and unacceptable to them) or should they leave the teachers to develop their own perspectives, which might result in their not recognizing the ills of society. They prefer to err in favour of committing themselves to their own moral values, without sacrificing teachers' independent thought and action. This seems to be a real dilemma in teacher education programmes based on reflection. The question is what should teachers be encouraged to reflect on? And is it ethical to direct them to reflect in a particular way teacher educators believe in?

A way out of this dilemma is proposed by educators who strongly argue that teaching is "a profession of values" (Nixon 1995). They believes that teachers have or should have "values" resilient to reductionists' or relativists' theories (see Brumfit 1995 on this theme). Educators who believe in this maxim are unwilling to compromise and

claim to be clear about their intentions and long-term aims. Nixon (1995: 220), for example, argues that

> Values are important not because they provide logical explanations, but because they are asserted and require consent. They affect action by satisfying our sense of what feels right or awakening our sense of what is morally offensive.

He points out the "affective nature of values", their roots, and implications:

> The affective nature of values - the way they cling to feelings and associations - accounts for their resilience and for the continuing influence they exert across generations. Values take us, as individuals and groups, back to our roots for the purpose of reclaiming what is morally alive in our communial pasts; they trace old loyalties but point also to new possibilities for realizing our own moral agency and for supporting that of others.

Based on the above discussion, it seems that reflection can be used for different purposes, "good" or "bad", and the "good" and "bad" mean what people wish them to mean. It is difficult for me to judge the value of teacher education programmes based on radical views of refection in some cultures of which I have no or little experience. However, I tend to agree with Nixon's central theme that teaching is essentially "a moral profession". This maxim can claim universality, I believe, in spite of some inevitable cultural differences. I also agree with Nixon's suggestion that the values implicit in teaching as a profession "have to be actively sought out and acknowledged":

> The prime task for teachers as professionals, therefore, is to work out their educational values, not in isolation but in collaboration ... and amid the complexities of school life. (Nixon 1995: 220)

The AR approach to teacher and pedagogic development is a better alternative to the reflective approach for the teachers involved in this project. First, it places teacher values in the centre of the activity, not to preserve them as eternal, but to keep them continuously checked and challenged. Secondly, the AR approach is closely related to the reflective model. According to Wallace (1991: 57), AR is "an extension

of the normal reflective practice of many teachers, but it is slightly more rigorious and might ... lead to more effective outcomes". Thirdly, a research approach will urge the teachers to read in order to support their claims (Hammersley 1993). The "more effective outcomes" Wallace mentions in the quotation above might come about by asking teachers to provide explanation and justification for their research claims (McNiff 1988; Whitehead 1989). Moreover, collaboration and support from colleagues in the framework of collaborative AR can, I believe, help the teachers to articulate their personal theories and thus avoid the pitfalls of alienating teachers by intruding into their private territory. Finally, unless teachers carry out research in a disciplined manner, they might rely more on their intuition rather than on a combination of intuition and strategic thinking, planning, acting, and evaluating. The latter approach is more likely to lead to "acceptable outcomes", and, hence, to teacher and pedagogic change. As Schon (1983: 56) explains, "Much reflection-in-action hinges on action and the experience of surprise".

3.5 The Action Research Approach

3.5.1 Introduction

Adelman (1993) and Noffke (1995) trace the history of AR back to Kurt Lewin, who encouraged ordinary people to engage in making enquiries about their own lives as a way for improving them.

Action research is now widely used in mainstream education for a variety of developmental purposes (Somekh 1995; Scott and Sealey 1993). In the field of language education, AR is relatively new (see Nunan 1989a; Crookes 1993), especially in EFL contexts. There are reports of small-scale classroom projects (e.g., McGinity 1993; Daoud 1994 a & b) and school-based ones (e.g., Barmada 1993; Herguner 1995; Ribisch 1996; Vieira 1997). It was also used for introducing curriculum innovations in aid funded projects in some developing countries (Holliday

1994).

In section 3.4.2.5, I have pointed out that AR is an extension of the reflective approach and does not exclude theory. In the rest of this chapter, I try to provide more details on AR with particular reference to teacher development and begin by trying to define it and present its characteristics.

3.5.2 Defining and Rationalising EFL TAR

The main aim of this section is to define and rationalise TAR. It is mostly concerned with specifying what is meant by TAR and its scope, procedure, and methodology. The discussion here pertains to the first order AR (my colleagues' and mine as classroom teachers), but in line with the research approach and the principles that have guided action (Chapter 4), the second-order AR is inclusive of my colleagues'. The difference is that my research is broader and more rigorous.

3.5.2.1 Definition and Characteristics

Action research has been defined in a number of ways which have "improvement of practice" in common. One widely quoted definition is Carr and Kemmis's. They define AR as:

> ... a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understanding of these practices, and the situations in which the practices are carried out (1986: 162).

Lomax (1995: 50; 51) points out that AR is "a commitment to act to bring about improved practices, as part of the research process". She qualifies this "commitment" as "ethical", concerned with "values", and the intention to achieve "acceptable outcomes". According to Nunan (1992a: 229), AR is a "form of self-reflective inquiry carried out by practitioners, aimed at solving problems, improving practice, or enhancing understanding. It is often collaborative." Nunan's definition is the one used

in this thesis for both first- and second-order AR, and in the case of my research Lomax's ethical qualifications are basic (see 4.3.4). Both first- and second-order AR in this study aim at solving problems, improving practice, and enhancing understanding at the same time, though the scope and focus are, of course, different.

Several characteristics of AR are mentioned in the literature. Carr and Kemmis (1986: 164) describe it as "participatory" and "democratic". In their view, AR is "a simultaneous contribution to social science and social change". Nunan (1992a: 18) relaxes the collaborative intent in AR. He sees collaboration as "highly desirable", but does not see it as "a defining characteristic" (cf. Carr and Kemmis 1986: 165; Elliott 1989: 83-84; 69; Hopkins 1993: 1). The reason, he points out, is that teachers "are either unable, or unwilling, for personal reasons, to do collaborative research" (p. 18). He also argues that TAR is not necessarily "concerned with change". In his view, "A descriptive case study of a particular classroom, group of learners, or even a single learner counts as action research". Nunan (1992a: 18) adds: "That is said, I know of a few such studies which have not resulted in change of some sort".

Nunan, as can be seen, does not seem to consider "understanding" (see his definition above) as "change". I would like to argue that understanding in AR is change in its own right (in abstract form), a basis on which action is usually built. There is a difference here between TAR and an outsider's research in the same classroom. Both seek understanding but perhaps for two different purposes. One needs to consider the motivation for research. What probably motivates the outsider is promotion or fame through publication. But the teacher's motivation is to improve her/his teaching and maximize her/his potential and that of the learners. Understanding in the teacher's case is bound to lead to change. That is why Nunan says he knows of a few TAR studies that have not led to change.

What type of AR can EFL practitioners carry out? For Nunan, AR can be qualitative, quantitative or a combination of both. It can be ethnographic or case study. It can use different techniques: observation, questionnaires, interviews, etc. (see also McNiff 1988). He encourages discourse and interaction analysis (see also van Lier

1988; 1996). I agree with Nunan's idea of broadening the methodological scope of TAR. There is no reason why EFL teachers cannot work within the traditional normative paradigm as well as the interpretive one. The reason is that the former is still the most prevalent in our part of the world, and if we want to apply Holliday's principles of "appropriate methodology and social context" (see 4.3.3), there is a need for flexibility and the acceptance of both the normative and interpretive types as TAR. In the former, the teacher can set up a piece of experimental research and collect data for quantitative analysis. In the latter, she/he can work within the naturalistic paradigm, using ethnographic techniques, among others, and qualitative data. The teacher can also combine both traditions or use multiple methods and perspectives (see 4.3.5; see also Daoud 1995b; Shammas 1995; Al-charif 1995). It all depends on the aim of the research, the socio-academic and political conditions in which the teacher operates and on the questions to which the teacher intends to find answers (see 4.3.3). No matter what the aims of the research might be, ethical considerations take precedence in deciding methods, procedures, and techniques (see 4.3.4).

Action research is a strategic and flexible approach to enquiry. Carr and Kemmis (1986: 165) give "central importance to ... strategic action" and Somekh (1995: 341) mentions that AR uses many of the "methods and techniques as traditional qualitative research, but the aim is always to make the best possible use of these tools within the constraints of the workplace":

> ... there is a trade-off between benefits of giving practitioners the central role in research ... and the resulting limitations in terms of the time they can devote to research ... (*ibid.*)

Nunan (1992a) also makes allowances in view of the long-term benefits of such research for both teacher and learner. He believes that external validity need not be an imperative in TAR. If there are research questions, data, and interpretive analysis (his three defining elements of research), this should count as research, he says.

Flexibility is particularly needed in the case of EFL TAR. The reason is the fact that in the vast majority of cases, studies carried out in both the normative and qualitative traditions are based in ESL rather than EFL contexts. This is not to mention "the anglophone grip on published research" (Swales 1990a: 97) or the unavailability of this published research in poor countries. Now if we agree that EFL differs from ESL in many respects (see 3.2), we come to recognize the need for substantial research in EFL to identify its unique problems and needs. If EFL teachers are not trusted to carry out such research, EFL will stay largely unexplored, simply because there is no one else, in the local context, better qualified than the teachers to carry out this task. If English is truly considered an international language, the anglophone grip need to be loosened, and EFL teachers need to be given voice and support.

One central characteristic of TAR is **sharing.** Indeed, Stenhouse's minimal definition of research is "systematic enquiry made public" (cited in Gurney 1989: 14). Lomax (1995) stresses the importance of discussion and sharing with ""educated"" audience who are able and willing to judge the authenticity and relevance of the research (see also Somekh 1995: 352). Nunan also (1989a: 121-27) devotes a whole section to "Reporting teacher-research" and mentions different "options" for reporting: "written accounts", "seminars and oral papers", "slide/photograph show", "poster display", "discussion", etc. The concepts of "critical friend" and "critical community" in AR have evolved from this collaborative, learning, and educative intent (see 3.5.3).

3.5.2.2 Procedure

"Procedure" was one of my main concerns while reading the literature. I needed one sensitive to the local social and academic cultures (see 3.4.2.3 and 4.3.3). As we have seen in Chapters One and Two, we are a group of teachers who belong to two generations: old and experienced and generally conservative and young and inexperienced, but highly enthusiastic and motivated. The ones among us who are qualified in applied linguistics are a minority, and we teach diverse groups of learners of different specializations (see 1.4.3). The question that puzzled me was how the

teachers should be grouped in order to maximise their learning potential from one another and at the same time provide a non-threatening research environment. The answer came as I read Winter (1996). In his paper, Winter illustrates the concept of Dialectics (see 4.4.3) in AR:

> ... groupings which include both enthusiastic and cynical members are potentially more interesting, because it is within those aggregations that there is more potential for change of the overall work group. The balance of power within the mixed group will be more helpful in understanding the social psychology of that particular work group. (p. 21)

The grouping suggested by Winter brings the participants together in one macro group. It has good potential for individual and collective change and development. There is another significant advantage: the theory/practice dialectic. Winter (1996: 24) points out that theory and practice are "two different and yet interdependent and complementary phases of the change process". His vision of "theory" in AR is the one we need most at the ESPC because of our past education (language and literature rather than education or ELT). Winter places high value on theory, pointing out that "actors in the situation [need to] carry out their activities in the light of a ... corpus of theoretical understanding" (*ibid.*: 25). In a recent CARN conference he reaffirmed this view, as reported by Whitehead's e-mail message to CARN memebers:

> Theory in action research is a form of improvisatory self-realisation, where theoretical resources are not predefined in advance, but are drawn in by the process of enquiry. (Winter Cited by Whitehead 1997)

In his comment on Winter's view of "theory" in AR, Whitehead wondered "if "we" action researchers work with two different kinds of explanation":

> One drawn from traditional kinds of conceptual/professional theories and one which we create ourselves in dialogical and dialectical forms of representation. The question I'm asking is: Are our educational theories forms of improvisatory self-realisation in which we create descriptions and explanations for our own educational development? (Whitehead commenting on Winter's speech at CARN Conference 1997: e-mail to CARN members: 24 November 1997)

Winter's vision of the sociology and psychology of work groups in AR and his view of interdependence of theory and practice consolidated my confidence in the value of discussion circles (DCs) that I envisaged as the best procedure that could bring us, experienced and novice, together to discuss the project ideas and learn from one another (see 4.4.4 and 4.5.3.1 for details; see also Schultz 1989).

Another type of worry for me as an EFL teacher-facilitator was over what is termed AR "spiral" (see Hopkins 1993: 55ff for a critique). McTaggart (1996: 248-9) sees the spiral as "a heuristic for people starting to research their own practice". Its aim, he says, is to make "explicit the need for acting differently 'within the study' as a result of progressively learning from experience". He believes that it "is a mistake to think that slavishly following the 'action research spiral' constitutes 'doing action research'" (p. 248). There is a general agreement, however, that AR differs from traditional research in being generally cyclic in nature and that the research might involve one or more cycles (see Carr and Kemmis 1986: 162).

Different procedures or spirals are recommended. Nunan (1992a: 19) suggests seven steps: (1) initiation, (2) preliminary investigation, (3) hypothesis, (4) intervention, (5) evaluation, (6) dissemination, and, finally, (7) follow-up. This was my (second-order AR) guide throughout (from baseline till the end). However, for the first-order TAR, I have found Richards and Lockhart's (1994: 27-8) recommended spiral teacher-friendly. It has five steps: initial reflection, planning, action, observation, and reflection. I have also found Whitehead's (1989: 43) dialectical procedure to personal and professional development useful for EFL teachers. This form of AR differs from other forms in its "inclusion of "I" as a living contradiction within the presentation of a claim to educational knowledge" and involves asking questions of the kind: "'How do I improve my practice?'"(*ibid.*). It seems to be suitable for teachers:

> I experience problems when my educational values are negated in my practice.
> I imagine ways of overcoming my problems.
> I act on a chosen solution.
> I evaluate the outcomes of my actions.
> I modify my problems, ideas, and actions in he light of my evaluations ... (and the cycle continues) (*ibid.*)

McNiff (1992: 32) mentions that this approach is used in the award-bearing professional development courses at the University of Bath and illustrates its use. According to this school of thinking, AR "works towards the best interest of the other, and its methodology is dialogue" (*ibid.*: 33). It is a form of AR that we have made use of in this study in our AR report or "validation" meeting in the Research and Reporting Stage, and we have found it empowering for self- and group development.

3.5.3 "Critical Friends" and "Communities"

The concepts of "critical friends" and "critical communities" are familiar ones in current literature on practitioner AR. The term "critical friend" has a "collaborative intent", according to Lomax *et al.* (1996: 153). A critical friend is ideally a colleague from the same school, one who knows the context and has "shared experience" (p. 165) with the teacher-researcher. The role of the critical friend is to provide "critical but supportive" critique and feedback with the aim of improving the quality of the enquiry and moving it forward. In this way a critical friend can help the teacher-researcher to see things she/he might not see. Lomax *et al.* (1996: 157) point out that a critical friend should possess "skills of mentoring" and should be trusted by the teacher-researcher. Trust, they believe, is basic in this "learning relationship" (*ibid.* 161) (see also Vulliamy and Webb 1991 and 1992; Lomax and Evans 1996; and, the more recent, King 1998).

One type of learning partnership practised in some professional settings in Britain (e.g., Language Studies Unit, Aston University) is termed "cooperative development" (see Edge 1992). It is grounded in the values of humanistic psychology. Some of the supervisory approaches to teacher training/development work within this tradition, which requires a high degree of respect, empathy, honesty and a capacity to listen (see Gebhard 1990a and b; Gebhard *et al.* 1990; Gaies and Bowers 1990). These are powerful and empowering concepts and procedures that EFL teachers need (see 2.5.1; 2.5.2; 3.2), and I, therefore, made use of them in this study to the extent the context and circumstances allowed, as will become apparent in the rest of this thesis.

Another but more loosely defined concept that I have found interesting and beneficial to EFL teachers, both in the short and long-run, is "critical community". According to Kemmis (1987: 81), collaborative approaches to TD require the "establishment of critical communities of teachers", who are "committed to a critical exploration of their ... theories and practices". In his view, "students and others" can be included in such critical exploration which, he believes, requires "the best of what the best among us can give ..." (Lewin cited in Kemmis 1987: 81). Gore and Zeichner (1995: 211) mention "research communities" in which "teachers and student teachers can work together on projects relevant to their situations" (see Kent 1985; Gebhard *et al.* 1990). One type of "research community" is mentioned by Grimmett (1995). Critical communities of teachers usually share a common intent: "to develop ... individually and collectively" (Bartlett 1990: 205). In some educational institutions that use an AR approach to TD, a critical community can also provide a source of validation for TAR, and include among others, critical friends and peers (Lomax *et al.* 1996). It is important that all members of the "critical community" have their voices heard, and a consensus is reached (Stevenson *et al.* 1995). This concept was extensively utilised in this research project (see Chapters 5, 6, 7, 8).

3.5.4 General Advantages of TAR

Teacher action research has been found to have many advantages for the teacher that traditional forms of research fail to provide:

1. It begins with and builds on the knowledge that teachers have already accumulated.
2. It focuses on the immediate interests and concerns of classroom teachers.
3. It matches the subtle, organic process of classroom life.
4. It builds on the 'natural' processes of evaluation and research which teachers carry out daily.
5. It bridges the gap between understanding and action by merging the role of the researcher and practitioner.
6. It sharpens teachers' critical awareness through observation, recording and nalysis of classroom events and thus acts as a conscious-raising exercise.
7. It provides teachers with better information than they already have about

what is actually happening in the classroom and why.
8. It helps teachers better articulate teaching and learning processes to their colleagues and interested community members.
9. It bridges the gap between theory and practice.

(Nunan 1989a: 3-4, citing Beasley and Riordan)

More recently Elliott and Sarland (1995: 372) have listed 11 advantages of TAR. Many of the advantages mentioned in this literature will appear in the following discussion of the contribution of TAR to TD and in the findings of this study.

3.5.5 TAR and Teacher Development

Section 3.3.1.4 presented the role (among other approaches) can play in pedagogic innovation through TD. In the following sections, the focus is on the interplay between TAR and TD, which, of course, includes learner and pedagogic development. It has been found that TAR can contribute to TD on different interrelated levels: personal, professional, group, and professional community, which provide a solid ground for teacher CPD.

3.5.5.1 Some Aspects of Professional Learning: Theory

In TAR personal and professional development are related and mean learning (Somekh 1995). Underhill articulates the main principles of this learning:

> Teacher development is no different from personal development, and as such it can only be self-initiated, self-directed, and self-evaluated. No one else can do it for us ... (Underhill 1992: 79)

Personal development is **self-initiated.** This maxim has been substantially validated by research and experience, particularly in the case of adult learning (see Knowles 1990; Tight 1996; Moore 1988).

Awareness is believed to be the first step in any type of learning. TAR has been shown to be an effective strategy for raising self-awareness and building on it (see # 6 in 3.5.4). According to van Lier (1996), awareness is a basic "foundational

principle" and the starting point in learning. For him, awareness has its "epistemological" and "axiological" (or values) dimensions. The former includes "focusing attention" and "role of perception" (p. 11). The latter includes: "know what you are doing, and why". This comes as a result of "conscious engagement" and "reflection" (*ibid.*). van Lier explains that one cannot learn something new unless one becomes "aware of its existence" first and that awareness is very much related to past experiences (see his educational anecdote about the stone-age man from New Guinea, p. 11).

Underhill (1992: 73) distinguishes between three types of self-awareness: (a) awareness of performance, (b) awareness of potential, and (c) awareness of development. The first relates to questions we ask ourselves in order to understand the effect of our "current behaviour and attitudes" on our learners, colleagues, and ourselves, with the aim of reducing "the disparity" between our aspirations and our actual practice. The second relates to "the choices" we make to realize more of our potential, and the third is concerned with making "qualitatively better choices"* in our practice. This reflective cycle can modify practitioners' current thinking, attitude and behaviour (see 3.4.2).

The "type of question" we ask ourselves is a basic criterion in our development, according to Underhill (1992: 72; 73). He mentions two types of questions, which he describes as "high-yield" and "low-yield". The former have high potential for self-awareness and development and are "high risk" because they challenge our current beliefs and attitudes. The latter have low potential for self-awareness and development and are "low risk"; they do not challenge "my status quo", to use Underhill's words (see also Bartlett 1990 and Underhill 1993).

In Underhill's humanistic philosophy, questions the teacher asks her/himself need to be directed to the self rather than to the other (1989; 1992). van Lier's (1994: 8) perspective is different. He encourages outward-looking questions and favours "problem-*posing*" over "problem-solving" (cf. Widdowson 1990). His reason is that

"artificial" or extrinsic constraints that affect our performance and potential are much more than constraints "intrinsic" to the learning task" (For more discussion of this issue and practical examples from this study, see sections 4.3.1 and 5.2.2).

Both Underhill's and van Lier's arguments are convincing. I tend to agree with van Lier, though, that one cannot question oneself without involving others with whom one is working, whether students, colleagues, or administration (see section 4.2 and 7.2.2; 8.5 and 8.6). However, one is free to the extent her/his environment allows. This takes us back to Nixon's argument (section 3.4.2.5) that in our professional work or relationships, there are some basic values that one cannot dispense with. These are embedded in what Stenhouse (1983) and van Lier term "autonomy" (i.e., choice and responsibility), and in what van Lier (1996) terms "authenticity": saying what one "genuinely feels and believes" (van Lier 1996: 13). Authentic actions are "*intrinsically-motivated*", whereas inauthentic actions are "undertaken because everyone else is doing them," van Lier argues. He believes that authenticity is bound up with awareness and autonomy, and that it is "the *result* and the *origin* of awareness and autonomy" (p. 13; all italics in original). (See also 4.3.1; 4.3.2; and 8.3 for details and discussion).

Studies have shown that TAR is far more effective than outsider research in raising teacher self-awareness, and hence in effecting personal/professional development. Britten and O'Dwyer (1995: 89), for example, report on a study in EFL teacher self-evaluation in Morocco. The self-evaluation scheme they have used seems to have fallen short in achieving its desired effect. TAR, on the other hand, is widely reported to have contributed to sharpening teacher's analytical powers and heightening their self- awareness (see Ramani 1987; Pennington 1989, 1995; Breen *et al.* 1989; Roberts 1995; Holliday 1991b; Burton and Mickan 1993; Nunan 1993). In an action research study focusing on reflection and self-evaluation, O'Hanlon (1993: 245) shows how personal and professional values are gradually integrated through the techniques of self-evaluation and understanding of theoretical principles. Improvement was supported by peers in collaborative efforts (see section 5.4; 6.3.2.2 and 6.4.2.2).

Both Underhill (1992) and van Lier (1996), among other teacher educators, believe that **feedback** is essential for self-awareness and self-development (see section 4.4.6 on feedback). Feedback, according to Underhill, comes from two sources: "primary" and "secondary experience". The former is the teacher's own observations of her/himself "in action and in reflection". The latter from the group, who tell the teacher-researcher about her/his performance. Feedback from colleagues, according to Underhill (1992: 74), "needs to be given supportively and accurately, and requires a degree of trust, honesty, and respect". He points out that

> ... the psychological climate that facilitates teacher development is characterized by interpersonal caring, understanding, and trust, along with shared commitment to the process of intentional development. Such an atmosphere may help participants to feel secure enough to be more honest with themselves and with others, to have less need to pretend ... in their responses, and to be willing to reciprocate in supporting the developmental efforts of others.

Studies have also shown that teacher-self awareness, spurred by feedback strategies, has contributed potentially to building self-confidence. This has been identified as "the major contribution" of TAR (Vulliamy and Webb 1991: 226). It was also found that TAR has contributed to a "feeling of self-satisfaction" (*ibid.*), something believed to be of high importance for teachers in general (see Nias 1989).

These aspects of teacher development are needed in the context of this study and similar others (see 2.5.2 and 3.2). Most urgently needed is the type of "psychological climate" Underhill has described above and a boost of self-confidence through the discovery of one's potentials. TAR has been shown to be far more effective than conventional ways of TD because TAR

> concerns the search by individual teachers for a way of teaching that continually draws out their potential to facilitate a quality of learning that is more significant, more worthwhile, more effective, more personally engaging, and more rewarding for both teacher and learners, as well as for the community they work in. (Underhill 1992: 71)

3.5.5.2 Other Aspects of Professional Learning: Theory *and* Practice

As has been shown in the previous section, personal and professional development are closely interrelated concepts. This section, therefore, can rightly be seen as repetitive of what has been discussed earlier. However, I would like here to draw on research evidence.

Three main points are raised: the potential of TAR in developing (a) conceptual and attitudinal awareness (which I see as complementary); (b) learning/learner awareness; and (c) writing-related awareness.

Conceptual and attitudinal awareness

It is known that conceptual knowledge and beliefs determine how people think about the world and consequently their behaviour and action (Stenhouse 1975; Eraut 1994). When a teacher embarks on an AR project, her/his conceptual frameworks and values will have already been formed through early experiences as learner and teacher. These have been found difficult to change in conventional inservice programmes. TAR, on the other hand, has been shown to be more effective in this regard. In some cases, this potential of TAR has been discovered by trial and error on the part of teacher educators. Two examples of this evolutionary discovery are reported by in Breen *et al.* (1989) and Holliday (1991b). Holliday's account concerns teachers in a developing country, while Breen et al's study is based in Denmark.

There are numerous sources that provide research evidence on the effect of AR on developing teachers' awareness of theory, of themselves, the learner, learning, etc. (e.g., Lomax 1989b and 1990b; Elliott 1991 and 1993e; Lomax 1996). CARN publications are rich in examples (see, for example, Ghaye and Isaac 1989; Somekh *et al.* 1989; Ryan and Somekh 1991). In language learning, Nunan (1989a, 1992b), Edge and Richards (1993a), and Allwright and Bailey (1991) are good sources of evidence, and the number of publications is on the increase (see, e.g., Field *et al.* 1997; Wallace 1998; Richards 1998). In a recent plenary paper at TESOL Arabia, Richards (1996)

disseminated encouraging information about TAR and urged his audience to adopt this approach for their development. I was among the audience and had the chance to talk to Richards personally and ask him some questions on issues of concern to me as I was preparing for the CAWRP implementation. His advice and that of other experts and colleagues launched me and provided me with a wealth of ideas for my project.

One EFL source that provides evidence of the effect of teacher engagement in exploring classroom processes is Prabhu (1987). His book shows how teachers' involvement in research can develop their understanding of the relationship between theory and practice and the effect of this on their attitudes and classroom behaviour. Prabhu uses the term "plausibility" to mean teacher informed action, which involves, among other things, teacher understanding of the relationship between theory and practice and the ability to articulate this understanding. He reports differences between teachers who were actively engaged and those who were less so and adds:

> The teacher's sense of plausibility is ... likely to be influenced in some way - strengthened, weakened, modified, extended, or brought into greater awareness ..., and this, in turn, is likely to be an input to professional growth" (*ibid.*: 104).

Challenging teacher beliefs and values, then, is one main contribution of TAR. The same effect has been found in this study, as we shall see in the following chapters.

Learning/learner awareness

Grimmitt's (1995) paper provides several illustrations of teacher research. This is one example that shows the teacher-researchers' discoveries about learning and learners in a writing-focused project:

> We were impressed by the variety of thinking processes the children employed when helping one another. While thinking strategies are directly taught in the classroom, we feel that the risk-free environment is important in allowing the children to apply these strategies naturally and frequently. The social aspect of the environment allows children to hear the language of others, to communicate their ideas and to clarify their own thinking. (Myers, cited in Grimmett 1995: 120-21)

Similarly, in their evaluation of the effect of TAR on teachers and schools, Vulliamy and Webb (1992: 43) report a "major contribution to participants' professional development" and consequent changes "in policy and practice" for which the practitioners (many of whom were heads or deputy heads) were responsible. These changes were interpreted by the practitioners as resulting partly from

> change in attitude - notably a very widely voiced increase in self-confidence - and partly from viewing the teaching process from a variety of different perspectives. The most important influence seemed to be a greater understanding of the teaching-learning process from the pupils' perspective following the collection of pupils' data. (Vulliamy and Webb 1992: 43)

Such effects on the teacher and the institution have been substantiated in this study. Chapters 5, 6 and 7 are rich in details (for one interesting example, see 6.4.2.2).

Writing-related awareness

Reports about the empowering effects of TAR in Australia are particularly encouraging. Burton and Mickan (1993) and Nunan (1993) report the successes of an annual "languages inservice programme for teachers (LIPT), which "was offered annually in South Austraila". The authors focus mainly on teacher empowerment in writing:

> Participants undertook to write a report of their action research for publication. The primary audience for the reports was other language teachers. Although the writers were initially diffident about their ability to write in what they viewed as an academic genre, they found that the writing process itself became part of the clarification of their ideas and the setting of further action research and professional renewal goals. Moreover, their own experience made them intensely interested to read about colleagues' research experiences. (Burton and Mickan 1993: 119)

Similar effects have resulted from this TD project (see, for example, 7.2.2 and 8.5).

3.5.5.3 Group Development

Collaboration is highly desirable in TAR. Teacher collaboration has been shown to be an influential factor in teacher and school development (see Fullan and Hargreaves 1992a and b, Hopkins *et al.* 1994; Bennett *et al.* 1992). Underhill (1992: 79) points out that "other people can be indispensable in helping us to" develop (see also McNiff 1992), and many write about the psychological, social and intellectual benefits of being a member of a group (e.g., Underhill 1989: 252; Schultz 1989; Eraut 1994). At the same time, group learning has been shown to be potentially threatening to those outside the group (see 3.5.6.2 and Somekh 1989).

Evidence for the potential of the group for fostering TD comes from teacher-researchers who have experienced group learning and reported on it in their own voice. This is one example:

> By sharing observations, I am forced to reflect on my methods. This reflective process is qualitatively different from my personal reflections, as others' insights force my ideas to move forward to a place I could not have reached by myself. (Hunter and Tait, cited in Grimmett 1995: 120)

The secret of group learning in TAR groups is interaction and its role in prompting reflection (see 4.4.4; 4.4.5; 6.3.2.2; 6.4.2.2; 8.3.6). Reflection is seen as both personal and social in nature. On the personal level, reflection involves asking oneself questions (section 3.5.5.1). This interactive process with the self stems from the need to understand and develop. Reflection is also social. Hedge (1996, 1998) points out the importance of small group interactive methodology in teacher education courses in generating group reflection and insights. Similarly, Yinger and Hendricks-Lee (1993: 109, citing Brown *et al.*) write that " Social interactions 'give rise synergistically to insights and solutions that would not come about without them'". Group learning, then, is a potential source for teacher development.

The power of teacher collaboration has been substantiated in the present study (see 4.4.2 for methodological insights and 8.3.4 for discussion of the findings).

3.5.5.4 The Power of Sharing TAR

As explained earlier (3.5.2.1 and 3.5.3), reporting TAR is very important, and some consider it a basic criterion. Sharing needs to start in the immediate community, but should not be limited to it. There are other places and media for sharing TAR: teacher centres, symposia, conferences, newsletters, journals, e-mail, etc. Unfortunately, these are not available to the vast majority of EFL teachers in the developing world for economic reasons, and this deprives these practitioners from rewarding opportunities for learning. Personal sharing is one important aspect of being a teacher action researcher, and is empowering, in my experience. During my study in Britain, I met several teacher researchers at IATEFL and other conferences and symposia, and the after- conference exchanges and communication proved to be helpful on all levels. Three colleagues, not to mention experts, whose research and experience have been particularly insightful are Ribisich (1996) from Austria; Vieira (1997) from Portugal; and Johnston (1998) from the UK. Johnston's AR study was carried out at the American University in Cairo, and her research participants were adult Arab learners. Since it combined TD, the development of writing pedagogy, and student development, it was of particular use to me, and the researcher and I kept in touch throughout her write-up and mine. This is one genuine aspect of collaborative AR, the benefits of which extend beyond national boundaries and cultures (see also Daoud 1998a for another useful example of EFL and ESL teacher collaboration). AR fulfills its promises and premises when it results in self-benefit *and* benefit for the other. Prabhu (1987: 107) comments on the advantages of sharing and caring for EFL/ESL teachers and the profession as a whole:

> ... language teaching specialism ... is a matter of identifying, developing, and articulating particular perceptions of teaching and learning on the one hand, and seeking ways in which perceptions can be shared and sharpened through professional debate. Without this professional debate, a teacher has only classroom experience to draw on - and the pressures towards routinization in teaching are such that the classroom can easily cease to be a source of interpretable experience.

As Prabhu indicates, participation in professional debates counteracts the isolation of the classroom. This is another aspect of TD that has been substantiated in the present study, as will be seen in Chapters Six and Seven.

Figure 3.3 on the next page presents the CAWRP's approach to personal and professsional development. It shows one cycle in the process of CPD and builds on insights drawn from the ideas presented and discussed in this chapter and the one before it (see 2.6).

3.5.6 Challenges to TAR and Suggested Ways out

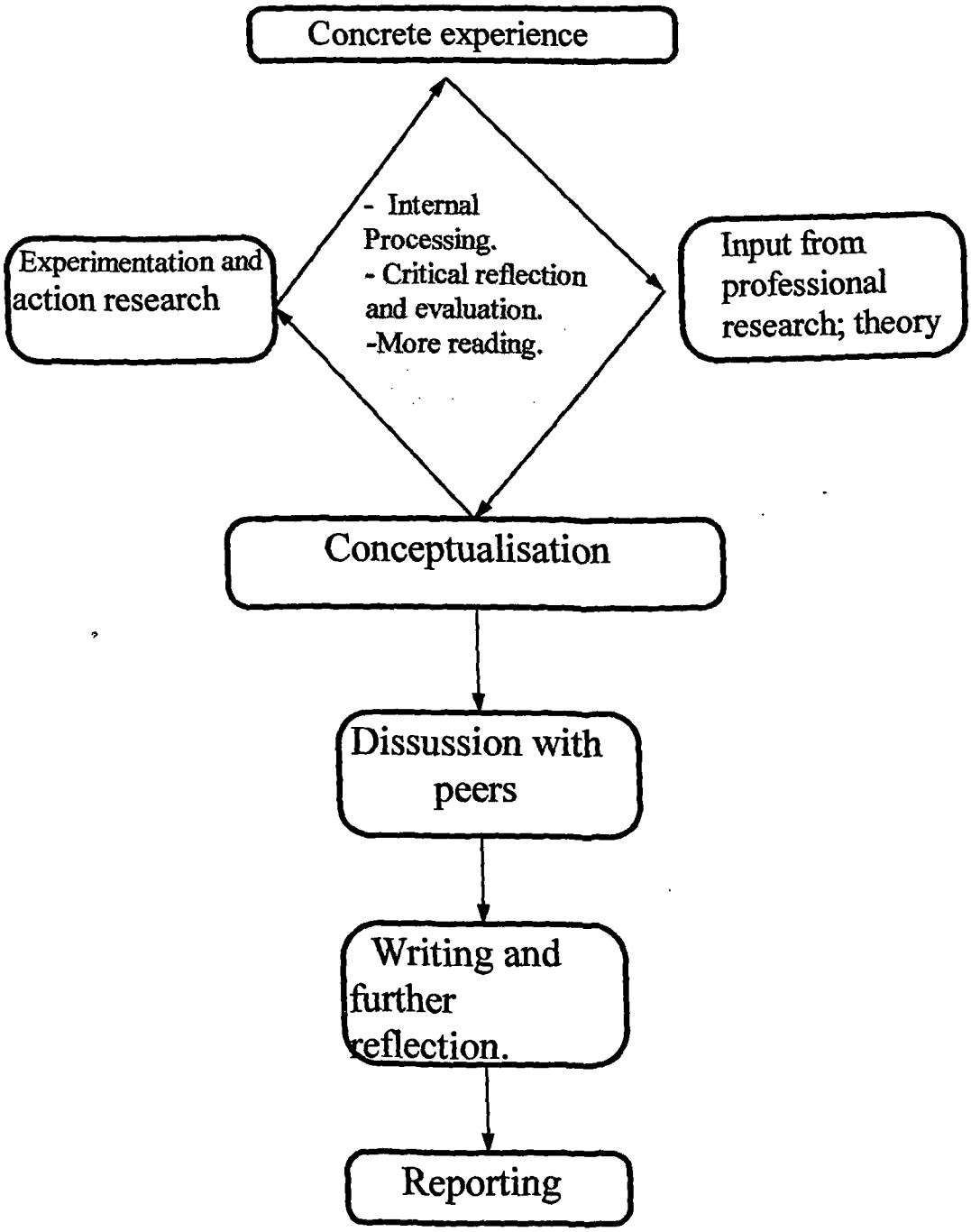
In spite of its advantages and benefits for the teacher, learner, and school, TAR, like any other approach, has its own challenges and dilemmas. In this section, I consider two challenges, which I have qualified as academic and cultural.

3.5.6.1 Academic Challenges

Academic challenges are worrying to EFL teachers who wish to publish their research, as research papers are usually scrutinized according to set criteria acceptable to the research community. TAR reports have been criticised by some as lacking in validity and reliability (see Beretta 1990) and as unorganised and incoherent (Myers 1985).

Several suggestions have been put forward to deal with these issues. As we have seen before, Nunan and Somekh proposed flexibility, and I argued for loosening the Anglophone grip on publication and giving EFL teachers a voice (see 3.5.2). Hammersely (1992) suggests "relevance" as an evaluation criterion of TAR reports. So does Allwright (1993), who mentions six other criteria: reflection, continuity, collegiality, learner development, teacher development, and theory building (see 3.3.1.4). As we shall see in the results chapters, all these criteria are present in this study. As for the quality of writing itself, Myers (1985) has stated certain criteria. In

Figure 3.3 The CAWRP's Approach to Teacher Development



Adapted from Kohonen (1992: 28)

his view,

> ... teacher research will be judged on the basis of its clarity of language, its organizational consistency, and its goodness-of-fit with the intuitions of the teacher community both in its definition of problems and in its findings (p.5).

According to Johnson and Chen (1992), who disagree with Myers, the concepts of clarity, unity and coherence are variable across cultures. Others have recommended considering TAR reports a different genre targeted at the teacher community (see Crookes 1993). These suggestions have been criticised by some as radical or anti-feminist (see Johnson and Chen 1992). In my view, their danger lies in deepening an already perceived division between academics and teachers (see Ur 1992). I tend to agree with Myers's suggested standards for the written reports and Hammrsley's and Allwright's criterion of relevance and other indicators.

Whitehead, in his "Foreword" to McNiff's book (1988: *ix*), makes a useful observation on TAR reports. "The work of teachers," he says, "is invariably rich in practical description but rather sparse in 'explanation'". He adds, advising teachers:

> . . .it is largely up to the teachers to gain the initiative within the academic community by strengthening the explanatory power of their accounts of professional practice. (p. *x*)

This sounds a logical piece of advice on which EFL teachers need to reflect. But, on the whole, teachers learn more as they gain expertise in both research and writing. In my experience, the best place to start is conference papers and from there move on to newsletters and conference proceedings. As more confidence, knowledge, and experience are gained, teachers can try refereed journals and other publications (see Daoud 1996c; 1998a). This was my message to colleagues in the course of this study.

3.5.6.2 Cultural Challenges

Cultural challenges are far more challenging to TAR than academic ones. These appear in different forms and shapes. *Time* is perhaps the most crucial factor that impacts on

TAR, and it has its cultural dimension. In many Third World countries, for example, public holidays, planned and unplanned, are numerous, and it is very difficult to stick to a schedule or plan (Adams-Smith 1980). Such socio-cultural factors complicate further the already compressed time in ESP, where courses are usually short and intensive. All these time-related issues have been discussed in the literature (see, for example, Hammersley 1992, Chapter 8, p. 139; Hammersley 1993; Allwright 1993; Grundy 1994; Hargreaves 1994a; Strauss 1995).

For dealing with the time constraint and its impact on the academic quality of TAR reports, several experts (e.g., Stenhouse 1975; Hopkins 1993) have recommended small-scale and manageable topics. This seems a reasonable suggestion that can be fruitfully applied in ESP settings.

Another cultural challenge relates to the nature of action research. In many educational systems decisions are centralised, and teachers have little say in changing matters. TAR is intended to improve teaching and promote teacher professionalism. These are very difficult to achieve without a fair amount of teacher autonomy and involvement in the decision-making processes. Time and space are also needed for reflection and critical evaluation. Otherwise TAR might prove to be counter-productive and harmful to the teacher, her/his students, and the whole institution (see 2.5.2.4, for example). These requirements and conditions might not be granted easily, and problems might arise as a consequence. This "political" aspect of TAR is widely reported (see, for example, Gurney 1989; Busher 1990; Griffiths 1990; Grundy 1996). Stenhouse (1975: 144) argues that "a limited ... autonomy [is not] a satisfactory basis for educational advance". Several others voice similar views (see Carr and Kemmis 1986; Somekh 1989; Noffke and Stevenson 1995). Under the heading "Politics will intrude", McNiff (1988: 72), for example, writes:

> Action research is political, in that it is to do with change. Often an individual researcher will find himself at odds with the established system. ... This is a cautionary note: that opposition will come the way of the action researcher who goes public. People are usually afraid of change and will often resist it by whatever means they have available. Action research needs teachers of courage.

Several suggestions have been made for dealing with the "politics" of TAR. Nunan (1989a) is particularly keen on TAR, and he devotes Chapter Seven of his book to implementation. He suggests a range of strategies and contingencies for dealing with all types of problems (see also Kemmis 1987 for similar concerns). Collaboration, participation, involvement, communication, collegiality, sharing and caring are key strategies and maxims emphasised by the majority of writers. Elliott (1991: 59), for example, recommends teacher collaboration and perceives it as a form of "creative resistance" to "hierarchical surveillance". Fullan (1991) recommends "persistence". He (citing Louis and Miles) believes that "evolutionary planning", "involvement of the principal or some other key leader", and "shared control" (p. 109) are basic for success. These are useful suggestions, but they mean different things to different people in different cultures. Therefore, one should be very cautious in selecting criteria.

3.6 Summary

This chapter has focused on several aspects of the theory and practice of TD that relate to the concerns of the present project. First, it looked at EFL/ESP teachers' needs and the challenges that face their education and development. The chapter pinpointed some principles and insights that can aid in designing a TD project that would be able to meet the ESPC teachers' needs and actualize their potentials and aspirations. Second, some perspectives on classroom innovation have been presented and critiqued for their value for EFL classroom innovation. Third, the chapter attempted to critically review three current approaches to TD. These are the applied science, the reflective approach and teacher action research. It has been shown that all these approaches have elements believed to be basic for TD in the context of this study, e.g., theory in the applied science; reflection, self-evaluation, and sensitivity to teachers' needs in the reflective approach. The chapter presents a conceptualisation of a model of AR that builds on different insights drawn from the literature. This is done in order for us, the CAWRP participants, to test and evaluate in practice. But, as indicated, the TAR approach is

not without challenges. These challenges, academic and cultural, have been discussed. Among these, time and "politics" stand out as the most difficult to deal with. Some suggestions to overcome them are evaluated, but they need to be tested in the context for viability and validity.

The next chapter focuses on the study's design and methodology.

CHAPTER FOUR

Design and Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is concerned with the design and methodology of the study, focusing on its Main Phase, the implementation of the Collaborative Academic Writing Research Project (CAWRP). It is organised in four main parts. The first presents the research paradigm and approach. The second discusses the principles and values that have guided the study, while the third is concerned with the strategies and procedures used for achieving its aims. The last section is concerned with action: research and development. It describes how the selected approach, principles, and strategies have been used.

It is not my intention to provide a review of current research paradigms in order to defend the approach I have opted to work within. These are widely discussed in the literature (see, for example, Burgess 1989, 1990 and 1992; Brumfit and Mitchell 1990a; Hammersley 1992; Denzin and Lincoln 1994a & b; Coffey and Atkinson 1996; Walford 1991; Miles and Huberman 1994; Wolcott 1994). We are living in a world of multiple realities, and "WRITING the present is always dangerous" (Lincoln and Denzin 1994b: 575). I am for the voices that advocate "Letting all the flowers bloom!" (Lantolf 1996) and "Talking across the differences" (Heyl 1997). Whatever paradigm we choose to work within, we have to justify the outcome and show our "warrant" (Edge and Richards 1998).

4.2 Paradigm and Approach

The decision to locate myself in the broad field of qualitative enquiry (Denzin and Lincoln 1994a & b) came after I had read widely in the literature on teacher

development (TD), conceptualised my research purpose and reflected on my beliefs, values, and motivation (see 1.5 and 1.6). Research methodology sources are enriching, but ultimately the teacher-researcher needs to pause, reflect, and ask the necessary questions: a) what are the aims of research in general?; b) what are the aims of my study?; c) what are my beliefs and values in relation to this particular research?; and (d) which approach is most suitable for it and why?

With regard to the first question, my own perception of the aims of research in general agrees with that of Burton and Mickan's (1993: 121), who write that "increasing understanding" of the world in which we live and work and "empowering ... the individual", the self and other, are two main aims of research in general. Regarding the second and third questions, I have already stated (see 1.2; 1.6.2; 2.6) that the long-term aim of the CAWRP was that my colleagues and myself should find ways to help us improve our practice and thus the learning of those in our care. The short-term aim, however, was to increase our competence in teaching Academic Project Paper (APP) writing. Since the majority of us had no experience in the very thing we were required to teach, it seemed logical that we learn how to teach research and writing by going through the process of research and writing up ourselves.

I have adopted a qualitative approach because of its potential for understanding and development. Its focus on the uniqueness of settings and research experiences makes it the paradigm that comes nearer to understanding reality (Janesick 1994:215; Miles and Huberman 1994: 16). Besides, qualitative approaches are currently gaining in authority in educational research, including TESOL (see Peirce 1995; Dubin and Wong 1990; Watson-Gegeo 1988). Freeman (1995) writes on how to ask "good" questions in investigating teacher practice, knowledge and understanding, and Holliday (1995) describes his use of an ethnographic approach to assess "language needs within an institutional context" in a Third World country. Similarly, Atkinson and Ramanathan (1995) use an ethnographic approach to study the different cultural norms of academic writing and its instruction at a large U.S. university and to compare the different viewpoints in order to identify difficulties non-native students experience in proceeding from EAP to freshman composition. Toohey (1995) writes on the potential

of qualitative research in TESOL and argues for a move from the ethnography of communication to critical ethnography. K. Richards (1996) uses ethnographic techniques for understanding teacher interaction in the staffroom of a collaborative EFL school. This approach has also been used by EFL teachers and teacher educators for development purposes (see, for example, Ramani 1987, 1988 and Ramani *et al.* 1988).

In line with the principles of "appropriate methodology" (see 4.3.3) and the maxim of "Practise what you preach" (3.4.2.3), which, among others, underpin the design and methodology of this study, an ethnographic action research approach (AR in short) has been adapted. AR means action, and this implies the need for specific types of data. According to Miles and Huberman (1994: 10), "qualitative data are not so much about 'behavior' as they are about *actions* (which carry with them intentions and meanings and lead to consequences)". "Some actions," they point out, "are relatively straightforward; others involve 'impression management' - how people want others, including the researcher, to see them" (*ibid.*). They also write about AR:

> The researchers, with local help, design the outlines of a 'field experiment' ... The data are collated and given to the 'activists,' both as feedback and to craft the next stage of operations.... this approach incorporates some of the features of naturalistic studies: participant observation, sensitivity to participants' concerns, focus on description, a holistic perspective, the search for underlying themes or patterns (*ibid.*: 9).

Teacher research confronts the question: "What type of action research?". Three types are mentioned in the literature: technical, practical, and emancipatory (see Carr and Kemmis 1986: 133; Zuber-Skerritt 1996b: 4). The type of AR adapted for this study is practical in orientation (see Noffke and Stevenson 1995). It operates within the hermeneutic paradigm advocated for language teacher education in general (see Richards and Nunan 1990b; Freeman and Richards 1993, 1996b; Bailey and Nunan 1996b & c; Freeman 1996a, b, & c). Practical AR is based on *praxis*, defined as "a moral disposition to act truly and justly" (Carr and Kemmis 1986: 33). It is informed action mediated by reflection and reflexivity (see 4.4.3).

The AR used in this study has a number of other characteristics. They are

pointed out by McNiff (1992: 3) in her book with Whitehead and Laidlaw. This AR:

- is practitioner generated;
- is workplace oriented;
- seeks to improve something;
- starts from the particular situation;
- adopts a flexible trial and error approach;
- accepts that there are no final answers;
- aims to validate any claims it makes by rigorous justification processes.

McNiff's approach is "generative" in nature. It is a spiral process of "planning, acting, observing, reflecting and replanning", which incorporates and builds on other dialectical forms of AR (Kemmis's, Elliott's, Whitehead's: see McNiff 1988: 44-45). This type has the capacity to generate new "spin off spirals" as problems are encountered and accommodated "without losing sight of the main issue" (*ibid.*: 45). McNiff (1992: 34-35) explains the term "generative" as partly focusing on self-realisation and empowerment but also involving the power to "transform the world" in conjunction with similarly empowered individuals:

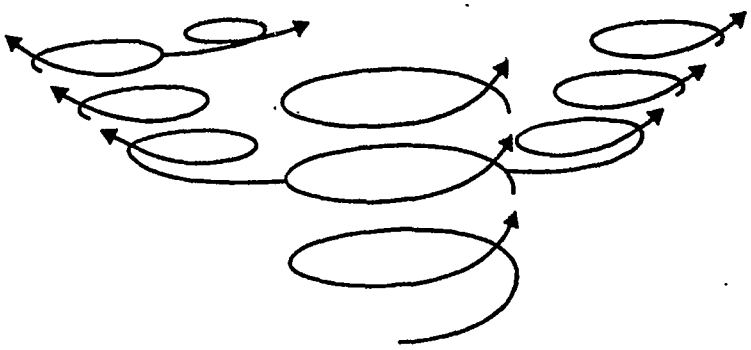
> I take the idea of generative power as the basic unit of energy whereby each thing may transform itself endlessly in the process of its own realization of potential. In terms of the educational enterprise, I see the development of educational knowledge as being the process of an individual's ever expanding consciousness ... (*ibid.*: 34).

It is, in other words, a view of the world that strongly believes in collaboration, participation, dialogue and interaction (see section 4.4), which are mainly undertaken by actors in social or educational scenes to solve problems and create understanding. Therefore, problems are seen as an integral part of the learning process, not as something unnatural. McNiff explains other potential values of AR:

> An action research approach does not only imply drawing theory out of practice. It also implies a critical reflection on a provisional theory; and a modification of the theory, and the process of theorising itself, as the situation requires (McNiff 1992: 6).

Figure 4.1 illustrates the generative form of AR, which allows for the complexity of social life. It shows that AR generates new areas of investigation at almost all points in the process.

Figure 4.1 McNiff's Generative Action Research Spiral



Source: McNiff 1988: 45.

In the light of this discussion, it is perhaps better to speak of principles rather than theory. "Theory" for many teachers has a negative connotation of rigidity (see Ur 1996). "Principle" includes propositional theory (Winter 1996) and "the beliefs people hold about teaching, learning, training, and the discussions they might have about overall aims, strategies, and policies" (Woodward 1991: 140).

4.3 Principles and Values

Seven principles and their related values underpin the design and methodology of this study. They come under the headings: freedom and control, relevance and authenticity, appropriate methodology, ethical considerations, triangulation and validation, multi-voiced text, and theorising.

4.3.1 Freedom and Control

Many proponents of AR believe that in order to achieve educational goals, there is a need to balance different things that pull in contradictory directions. According to van Lier (1996: 8), "the educational 'game' must be a dynamic interplay between constraints and resources". He argues that "If there is excessive control, and we are told exactly what to do, then education ceases to be education" (*ibid.*).

Freedom is defined in this study as a responsible kind of informed choice in the sense of being aware of what one is doing (see Bedley 1985). Literature on research methodology, TD, and classroom innovation (Chapter 3) suggests that the current balance is in favour of control. In the case of teacher education, teachers almost everywhere seem to suffer from excess of control (see Smyth 1995a and b; C. Kennedy 1996; D. Kennedy 1996; Kennedy and Kennedy 1996). At the same time, teachers generally enjoy considerable freedom in their own classrooms (Hammersley 1993). I agree with van Lier (1996: 8) that

> A key issue for teacher research is to distinguish between constraints intrinsic to the teaching/learning setting, and artificial constraints which a particular system or institution enforces on the teaching/learning setting.

The former empower, the latter erode the teacher's work.

One aim of the CAWRP was to provide learning opportunities for all the teachers at the ESPC to meet their short and long-term needs (see 2.5.2). Things were clarified to them in the Baseline Phase, and on this basis the majority committed themselves to this project (see 2.4.2.5). To establish the ethos of responsible freedom, I communicated this intent consciously and clearly in my correspondence with the Centre Director and other colleagues in the baseline follow-up period. In my letters, I suggested ways of working together, depending on the participants' selected choices in the Baseline Phase and invested great hopes in the Director's promised support:

> My suggestions [for TD activities] are based on the findings of "Areas of Interest Questionnaire" ... and on up-to-date recommended methods for staff development. Still, I need your advice on the applicability and feasibility of these activities ... in the

> light of your ... experience and knowledge of the context (letter to the Director: 4 August 1996).

In allocating responsibilities to the teachers who had signed up for their preferred activities, I indicated in my letter to the project coordinator that "If any of the above teachers does not like to contribute ... for any reason, I will certainly respect her/his wish; I do not like anyone to feel that she /he is obliged in any way to contribute".

This way, I gave the participants the freedom to opt out at any time in line with the principle of responsible choice. The answer letter I received shortly before implementation indicated both resources and constraints:

> I am very sorry not to be able to contact you earlier ... this year is a very busy one for us all ... because of the development projects we are working on: Material Evaluation, IELTS courses, and Teachers' Training project.
>
> As far as your project is concerned, I would like to tell you that I did distribute the articles to the tutors ... At the beginning, they were a bit unwilling to be involved in the workshops and presentations you recommended, but now they are ready to participate and collaborate as they have promised (coordinator's letter: 14 October 1996).

The implication of running three projects at the same time in addition to teaching was teacher and administrator overload. These I viewed as "artificial constraints" at the time. On the other hand, teachers' conscious commitment to the project and their willingness to do what they had promised exemplify responsible and informed choices. The overall indication, as van Lier suggests, is that TAR has to tackle the problem of multiple innovations first thing upon arrival in the field (see 7.2.4).

4.3.2 Relevance and Authenticity

In AR, projects serve the needs and interests of participants (Somekh 1993, 1995; Lomax 1995). Similarly, it is generally emphasised that school-based TD intervention studies are sensitive to the needs of the context. Stake (1995: 49), for example, points out that "All researchers have great privilege and obligation: the privilege to pay attention to what they consider worthy of attention and the obligation to make

conclusions drawn from those choices meaningful to colleagues". He adds that "Much of methodological knowledge and personality comes from hard work under the critical examination of colleagues and mentors" (*ibid.*). These were guiding principles in this study in the selection of project materials and methodology.

The Baseline Phase investigation found that colleagues needed to become aware of necessary principles and practice in teaching academic writing and carrying out AR (see 2.5.2). This can be achieved through the project materials the participants are provided with and the methodology employed to transfer this input to intake and output (Pennington 1996a and b). The materials and methodology need to be sensitive to context needs and also compatible with each other (Holliday 1994).

As for authenticity, it has four meanings and implications in the context of this study. First, it means authentic materials (taken from the real world, unabridged or modified), which are emphasised in ESP methodology (see Robinson 1991). Second, authenticity refers to "*intrinsically motivated*" action (van Lier 1996: 13), in the sense of free choice, not imposition. This does not exclude external motivation, but is inclusive of it. Thirdly, authenticity means teachers' ability to express their views and feelings in an atmosphere of trust, empathy, and genuine collaboration (see 3.3.1.3). Finally, there is "authenticity of *purpose*" (van Lier 1996: 139). This implies "*transparency*", which means knowing what one is doing and why one is doing it (*ibid.*; all italics in original). Like free choice, clarity of purpose is one of the tenets of communicative methodology (see Morrow 1981). For example, the "Peer reviews" article (Mangelsdorf 1992), which was selected for methodological input, employs the principle of purpose adopted in this study, as can be seen in the following extract from Sadik and Ola's presentation of the article to the group:

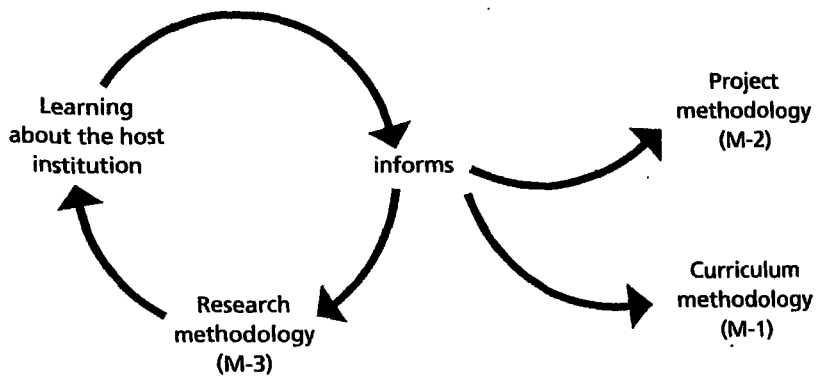
> **Ola:** The second thing [principle] is "awareness of purpose" - the objective. Students must be aware of the objective of the activity in order to cooperate. ... Also, you have "collaborative review" on p. 282 (the teachers follow in their copies of the article] (transcript).

This principle was practised in the CAWRP in the same manner advocated in the project selected materials, thus putting the principle of "appropriate methodology" (Holliday 1994) into effect.

4.3.3 Appropriate Methodology

Holliday (1994) argues for an ELT methodology appropriate to its social context. This integrates three methodologies, which, he argues, should be compatible: (a): the methodology of "*doing* English language education"; (b) the methodology of "*designing* and *managing*" projects, and (c) the methodology of "*collecting* the *information* about the particular social context in question" (p. 1; his emphasis). Later in his book (*ibid.*: 196-97), he refers to these methodologies as M-1, M-2, and M-3, respectively (citing Bowers). The function of M-3 (i.e., research methodology) is to make the other two methodologies appropriate to the social context (see Figure 4.2).

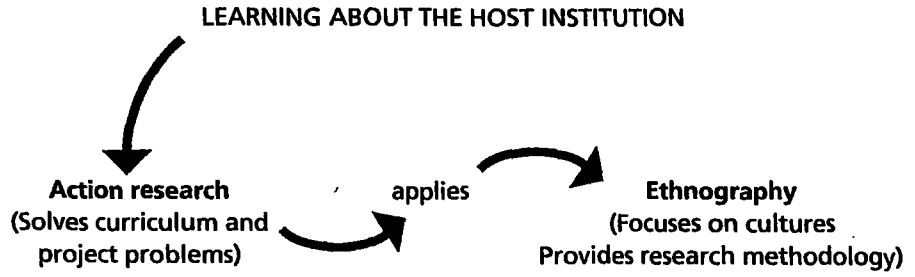
Figure 4.2 Holliday's Vision of the Function of Research in Project Design



Source: Holliday 1994: 197.

Holliday argues that "ethnographic action research" (AR, for short) is an appropriate research methodology because it "enables social investigation in a gradual, non-prescriptive way, as work proceeds" (*ibid.*: 1). His experience has shown that AR can help the investigator to learn about the host institution and solve problems as they arise (see Figure 4.3).

Figure 4.3 Ethnographic AR for Understanding Institutional Variables



Source: Holliday 1994: 197.

In Holliday's view, investigators "trying to find out necessary information" about classroom and institutional cultures "must embark on *thick description*" (*ibid.*: 5). He calls this "Means Analysis", which allows insights gradually gained from the data to feed directly into M-1 and M-2 methodologies. In his view, "checklists about *how* to do and *what* to do" do not help the researcher to know people and about them (*ibid.*: 3). In English language education, he explains, "We are all dealing with the perceptions, feelings and expectations of people, whether they are teachers or students". Therefore, "Whatever can be scientific about our work must be very *soft* science" (*ibid.*: 5; his emphasis).

Holliday's "culture-sensitive approach" takes classroom culture as the point of

departure (1994: 160). He argues that classroom culture ("what happens between people in the classroom") is "situation-specific" and is "influenced by cultures outside the classroom" (*ibid.*: 161). He also believes that the teacher knows most about classroom culture, and that others (heads, researchers, etc.) should collaborate with the teacher in order to develop appropriate methodology. He stresses the importance of critical reflection and self- and peer evaluation. His vision agrees with Wallace's maxim of "Practise what you preach", which is adopted for this study (see 3.4.2.3).

However, there is one aspect of Holliday's approach that I have found inappropriate and incompatible with my role as an insider-facilitator and with the developmental aims of this study. It is covert research. He justifies reliance on covert methodology and participant observation on the grounds of collecting the right information for understanding deep structure phenomena. But covert research is inappropriate in the context of this study for three reasons. First, covert research is inconsistent with the ethical values required in action research (see 4.3.4). Secondly, covert research contravenes the ethos of collaboration, which requires genuine trust, honesty and confidence (Stenhouse 1975; Edge 1992). Thirdly, covert research has the potential of engendering not only conflict and distrust, but also legal and political action. In some social contexts, innovative ELT ideas are often associated with foreign influence, and even honest insiders doing research overtly are susceptible to accusations of having been brainwashed by "imperialist ideology". This is more likely if these insiders are studying abroad.

To avoid such potential problems, I decided to resort substantially to overt research, using multiple perspectives and a multi-tool methodology. Holliday (1994: 210), among others, strongly supports creative responses to the "local situation exigencies". He warns EFL educators against "adaptations of methodologies which do not really suit" (p. 13) and admits that covert ethnography is a tradition "firmly" established "within [ESL] territory" but is still alien to EFL cultures (p. 193).

4.3.4 Ethical Considerations

Ethical issues are important in research in general (see Burgess 1989) and fundamental in educational AR. Indeed, what attracts me most to AR is a philosophy which is based on ethical reflection and committed to moral obligations (Elliott 1991). In this section, I first discuss the ethical dimension from the perspective of different stances in qualitative research and then consider how it is viewed in AR and the way it is applied in the present study.

In their introduction to Part I of their book, Denzin and Lincoln (1994a: 20-22) mention five ethical stances in qualitative research: absolutist, consequentialist, feminist, relativist, and deceptive. *The absolutist* position considers covert research unethical. It contrasts sharply with the *deceptive*, which justifies any method, even deliberate lies, "in the name of science, truth and understanding". In the *relativist* stance, however, ethical standards are determined by the researcher's conscience. The *contextualized-consequentialist* model builds on collaborative and noncoercive relationships (all italics in original). Researchers and researched share certain values and trust each other. They believe that "every research act implies moral and ethical decisions ... " (p. 21). In this model "investigators are committed to an ethic that stresses personal accountability, caring, the value of individual expressiveness, [and] the capacity for empathy" (p. 22). It is this last stance that I tried to adapt for the CAWRP, as it was the one most consistent with the aims and methodology of the project.

Ethical values are intrinsic in TAR. Hopkins (1993: 57-60), for example, explains six "criteria for classroom research by teachers" laden with ethical values. They regulate the demands a project like the CAWRP puts on teachers. The first criterion stresses that "teachers' primary job is to teach, and any research method should not interfere with or disrupt the teaching commitment" (p. 57). The second is that "the method of data collection must not be too demanding on teachers' time" (p. 58). Winter (1996: 16-17) also mentions several "Ethical aspects of methods". Three relate mainly to the researcher's role:

- All participants must be allowed to influence the work ....
- The development of the work must remain visible and open to suggestions from others.
- Permission must be obtained before making observations or examining documents....

These ethical considerations were observed in implementing the project to the extent contextual factors allowed.

4.3.5 Triangulation and Validation

Triangulation and validation are important research concepts (Cohen and Manion 1994; Blaxter *et al.* 1996). Janesick (1994: 214-215) points out that "Triangulation is meant to be a heuristic tool for the researcher". She mentions different types of triangulation, including "data triangulation" ("the use of a variety of data sources"); "theory triangulation" ("the use of multiple perspectives to interpret a single set of data"); "methodological triangulation" ("the use of multiple methods to study a single problem"); and "interdisciplinary triangulation". Richardson (1994: 522) mentions "crystallization" as an alternative. She believes that "there are far more than 'three sides' from which to approach the world". These types of triangulation are used in this study, which employs a multi-method approach.

In general, validity rather than reliability concerns case study workers (see Stake 1995; 1994). Janesick (1994: 216-17) believes that the "traditional view of generalisability limits the ability of the researcher to reconceptualize the role of social science in education ... ". She argues for case studies, saying that "the traditional sense of replicability is pointless" (p. 216). Like many writers, Janesick stresses "credibility". Quoting Patton, she mentions three criteria that make a study credible: type of technique and method, the researcher's experience and qualifications, and the assumptions that underlie the study (p. 216). She uses the term "methodolatry", which she defines as "a combination of *method* and *idolatry*" (her emphasis), to critique a "preoccupation with selecting and defining methods to the exclusion of the actual substance of the story being told" (p. 215). Similarly, Miles and Huberman (1994: 11)

use terms such as "intersubjective consensus", "plausibility", and "confirmability" to describe "meanings emerging from the data" (see also Edge and Richards 1998 for a recent review and discussion of these issues with particular reference to research students' work).

In spite of this relaxed view of reliability, validity remains basic (Nunan 1992a), and methods of data collection need to be carefully designed. Recommended methods for studies like the present one include focus group discussions, questionnaires, interviews, participant and classroom observation, recordings, diaries, research reports (writing), documents, etc. (see Burgess 1984, 1985, 1990, 1992; Pring 1987; Winter 1989; Lynch 1990; Day *et al.* 1993; Fontana and Frey 1994; Fine 1994; Adler and Adler 1994; Low 1996; McDonough and McDonough 1997). Dubin and Wong (1990: 286), writing with reference to inservice training, maintain that "endeavoring to understand as much as possible about the teachers' own views of their needs and expectations brings teacher educators into touch with an ethnographic approach". Hodder (1994) reviews literature on "The Interpretation of Documents and Material Culture", He mentions that "much depends ... on the trustworthiness, professional credentials, and status of the author ...". In his view, "Issues here include how long the interpreter spent in the field and how well she or he knows the data ..." (p. 401).

Writing is also presented as a powerful research and development tool (see Walker 1985; McNiff 1990). Richardson (1994) describes it as "a method of inquiry" (p. 516), "a process of discovery" (p. 523), and a "validated ... method of knowing" (518). One form of writing that is particularly important for teacher education is diary writing. It is recommended for projects that employ critical reflection and evaluation as means of development. Bartlett (1990: 209) writes:

> Probably the best means of observation is to record our practice. This may be done by audio or visual means ..., but the best means would seem to involve some form of writing. In writing, we begin not only to observe, but we take the first step in reflecting *on* and *about* our practice.

Bailey (1990: 224) adds another beneficial procedure: "In order to really learn from the record, the diarist should reread the journal entries and try to find the patterns therein".

In her review, she recommends diary writing as one "option among several possibilities" (see also Jarvis 1992; McDonough 1994). She believes that "tape recordings of ... lessons, and analyzing the resulting data ... [is] more objective ..." (p. 225). This can be equally true in the case of teacher learning. Recording of TD activities, as will be explained later, is a major method of data collection in this study.

4.3.6 Multi-Voiced Text

The principles presented and discussed above (4.3.1 to 4.3.5) imply the need for a research report in which all participants' voices can be heard in ways proportional to their contributions. Winter (1996: 23) calls this principle "plural structure". It consists "of various accounts ... " and ends not only "with conclusions intended to be convincing, but also with questions and possibilities intended to be relevant in various ways for different readers". The readers should include "members of the situation from which the report derives" (p. 24). The same principle is stressed by Strauss and Corbin (1994: 281; see also Shaw 1996).

Presentation of participants' voices in this thesis is based on the study design (see 1.6.2 and 4.4.1 on staging). Chapter Five focuses on the Orientation Stage, in which the majority of the Centre teachers participated in different ways and intensities (see 4.5.3). The chapter reports the process of teacher learning of the theoretical input and receptivity to it. It depends mainly on recordings, feedback questionnaires, and participant observation data (fieldnotes/diary). Chapter Six focuses on the Research and Reporting Stage and employs a case study method of presentation, based on data derived from recordings of the meetings in which the teachers' research was reported, teacher diaries, conference papers, feedback questionnaires, participant observation, and classroom observation. Chapter Seven focuses on the Evaluation and Follow-up Stage and is based on a summative feedback questionnaire, follow-up interviews, recorded meetings with the Centre Director, documents, and formal and informal communication with the teachers and the administration following the end of field work (see 4.4.6).

The case study method of presentation used in Chapter Six is well-established

and supported in education and other fields (see Walker 1986; Nunan 1992a; Stake 1994 and 1995). There are two main reasons for selecting this form of presentation. First, it gives a different dimension of analysis to that presented in Chapter Five, which takes a broad view, looking at the whole group. Chapter Six, in contrast, provides in-depth analysis of individual cases. It not only gives worth to the uniqueness of individual cases but also presents their commonalities. This is in line with the principles that underlie this study in which both collaboration and individuality are seen as necessary and compatible (see 3.3.1.3). Secondly, instructive case studies are valued these days for the purpose of ESP teacher education (see Doyle 1990). In a recent article in the *ESP Journal*, Jackson (1998) argues for "the use of reality-based ... cases in teacher education programs to better prepare teachers for ESP practice" (p.163)):

> In settings where useful, culturally appropriate teacher education materials may be difficult to obtain, cases can be a way of providing opportunities for reflection on relevant, meaningful teaching practice.

Evidence presentation is a hotly-debated methodological issue currently. Miles and Huberman (1994) stress the importance of data displays in presenting evidence, and I have heeded their advice in this thesis. Data boxes are one major form of evidence presentation in this study. It is a form of display that is becoming increasingly used in teacher education methodology sources (see Tomlinson 1995; Craft 1996; Ur 1996), but can be claimed to be of original use for research evidence presentation in this thesis. Presenting evidence in such form has the additional advantage of showing how I analysed data. Another unexpected insight deriving from this form of data display is that it has helped readers of my results chapters to suggest alternative ways of interpretation. This writer-reader intersubjectivity enhances the validity of the findings. A further advantage is that the CAWRP participants can, if they wish, check the evidence against the feedback reports they received in the course of implementation. In short, "Such exhibitions are open to audiences of all kinds" (K. Richards 1996: 40), especially the teacher community:

> By opening up the outcome of these projects to teachers in an accessible form, we offer an expansion of their research horizons, a broader contextualisation of action research and the possibility of a relationship between teachers and researchers that is built on respect for differences as much as on shared concerns (*ibid.* 40-41).

4.3.7 Theorising

The position adopted in this study in relation to theorizing is in line with its approach and methodology:

> Researchers and theorists are not gods, but men and women living in certain eras, immersed in certain societies, and so forth. Hence as conditions change at any level of the conditional matrix, this affects the validity of theories ... Theories are constantly becoming outdated or in need of qualification ... (Strauss and Corbin 1994: 279).

McNiff (1988, 1992) takes the same position (see 4.2). The teachers in this study tested some of the practical theories in the research articles they read and came up with similar or different conclusions to those reported in the studies (see 5.3.2). This gave them confidence in themselves and made them aware that their particular classroom determines the reliability of theories. The valid theory, Ellis (1995) argues, is the one that works for the teacher.

4.4 Strategies and Procedures

This section presents the strategies and procedures used in this study. These come under six headings: staging, collaboration and participation, dialectics, interaction and dialogue, critical reflection and evaluation, and analysis and feedback.

4.4.1 Staging

Staging is a basic design strategy in qualitative research and is essential in AR projects (Carr and Kemmis 1986: 162). Janesick's metaphor of "The Dance of Qualitative Research Design" (1994) is an intriguing example illuminative of the centrality of staging and related decision-making. According to Janesick, the "dance" has three stages. In the "warming up" stage, dancers ask: "What do I want to say in this dance?" Similarly, researchers ask: "What do I want to know in this study?". According to Janesick, this is "a critical beginning point" (p. 112). At this stage, "design decisions have to do with what is studied, under what circumstances, for what duration of time, and with whom" (p. 211). In the "exercising" stage, other decisions need to be made. Janesick mentions "effective use of time, participants' issues, and researcher's issues" (p. 211). She adds that "Because working in the field is unpredictable ..., the ... researcher must be ... flexible ... " (p. 213). Like McNiff (1988), who advises action researchers not to get distracted by side issues, Janesick (1994) reminds us that our immersion in the field must not take our minds off "the substantive focus of the study" (p. 213). As for the cooling-down stage, it also requires new decisions, the main one being when to leave the field setting and how, "an emotional and traumatic event because of the close rapport that can develop during the course of a study" (p. 214).

Further decisions have to be made "following the process of leaving the field". These usually relate to final data analysis. Janesick advises researchers to stay "close to the data" because this is "the most powerful means of telling the story, just as in the dance the story is told through the body itself" (p. 215).

These powerful images reflect how the Main Phase was staged (see Table 1.5). The Orientation Stage is similar to the "warming up" in Janesick's "dance". The research and Reporting Stage matches the "exercising", and the Evaluation and Follow-up Stages are like the cooling-down part. The main difference is that the research Janesick describes is not action research, and this makes the challenges vary considerably. McNiff (1992: 6) is aware of this fact. She points out that our

"temporary answers" operate "as the circumstances of my situation dictate".

However, the most challenging stage of the research process is "telling the story". According to K. Richards, writing "deserve[s] a place in methodological discussion" since [it] is ... a process of data reduction" (1996: 71). Writing is also viewed as challenging by Wolcott (1994: 17). He argues that "qualitative researchers need to be storytellers". He points out that "when we cannot engage others to read our stories ... then our efforts at descriptive research are for naught".

With reference to teachers' stories, Freeman (1996b: 88 ff.) tries to re-define "the relationship between research and what teachers know". He writes about teachers' powerful stories that come at the "awakened silence" following their "doing" and "knowing". In defense of teachers' stories, underestimated for long, Freeman argues that ""You have to know the story in order to tell the story"". "Knowing the story", he points out, involves three views of teaching: "as doing", "as thinking", and "as knowing what to do: the interpretive view". On this basis, Freeman argues his main point: teachers' stories are their "knowledge" (p.101).

In AR, the story metaphor is even more powerful. McNiff (1992: 7) argues that "Traditional research is grounded in the story", but "Action research is grounded in the story-teller". This is the main challenge and also the most educative aspect of educational AR. In my case, real learning took place in the cooling-down stage, when I had sufficient time to immerse myself in the data, not only through transcribing, but also reading and rereading. It was then that I started to come to grips with the teachers' realities and the meanings implicit in their "stories". It was then that I came to understand the person, the individual behind the story and the "truth" embedded in Stenhouse's message to the world: "It is teachers who, in the end, will change the world of school by understanding it" (cited in Hopkins 1993: xiv). "I hope that in some small way" (*ibid.*) this thesis will contribute to the knowledge generated by teachers' stories.

4.4.2 Collaboration and Participation

Collaboration in this study means three things: (a) learning together; (b) relating to one another; and (c) sharing the learning and responsibility, that is "everyone's view is taken as a contribution to understanding the situation" (Winter 1996: 13). Participation relates to the roles of the participants. These roles depend on the type of collaboration (see Reason 1994). Cohen and Manion (1994: 189) mention two types of collaborative action research. In the first, action research is carried out by "a group of teachers working cooperatively within one school", possibly without outsider support. In the second, teachers work alongside an outsider researcher or group of researchers. Collaboration in this study is of the first type (see 3.3.1.3 and 3.3.1.4).

The researcher's role is extensively discussed in the literature. Guba and Lincoln (1994: 115), describe the enquirer as "'passionate participant' actively engaged in facilitating the 'multivoice' construction". Stake (1995) devotes a whole chapter to "Case Researcher Roles". In his view, "The ... researcher plays different roles," including those of a teacher, advocate, evaluator, biographer, and interpreter. Stake emphasises the researcher's role as teacher, believing that "The intention of research is to inform, to sophisticate, to assist the increase of competence and maturity, to socialize, and to liberate" (pp. 91-92). Like the teacher, the researcher has "responsibilities" to teach by "the arrangement of opportunities for learners to follow a natural human inclination to become educated" (p. 92). Section 4.5.2 describes my role and that of my colleagues, and Chapters Five, Six, and Seven show our roles in action.

Collaboration and participation in teacher education projects have many advantages. Chief among these are shared responsibility and joint accountability. Both motivate commitment because all have stake in the outcome. However, some may raise questions about potential biases in reporting the findings. Freeman (1995: 581-82) points out "an essential tension between how participants see what they do and how it appears to others" (e.g., researchers):

> This tension is central to how qualitative research informs my work as a

> teacher educator, for it has given rise to "good" questions about what I do. I can categorize these questions within three perspectives: on practice, on knowledge, and on understanding.

The implication here is for careful attendance of researchers, participants, and auditors to the type of questions the study seeks to answer (macro and micro); on the substantive focus of the study; and finally on its representation.

4.4.3 Dialectics

The concept of dialectics is central in AR (see 4.2; 3.5.2.2). Carr and Kemmis (1986: 33) describe "The dialectic ... as the opposition of a 'thesis' and its 'antithesis', with a new 'synthesis' being arrived at when the thesis and antithesis are reconciled". They point out that dialectical thinking "demands reflection back and forth between elements." When "contradictions are revealed, new constructive thinking and new constructive action are required to transcend the contradictory state of affairs" (p.33). Sections 3.5.2.2 and 4.2 give more information on dialectics and how it was perceived to be of use in this study for TD (see also the next section).

4.4.4 Interaction and Dialogue

A dialectical approach to research methodology and professional learning implies interaction and dialogue. These two concepts are useful in the context of language learning and, by implication, in language teacher education, particularly in the context of innovation and teaching writing because of the stress and strain involved (see Hedge 1988; Singh and De Sarkar 1994; Scott 1995). van Lier (1996: 5) points out that interaction is "a key element in teacher development". Similarly, he believes that "Curriculum innovation ... can only come about through the fundamental change in the way educators and students interact with one another" (p. 158). Additionally, interaction is a way of knowing in an ongoing manner in view of the fact that "realities may change as their constructors become more informed and sophisticated" (Guba and Lincoln 1994: 111).

In this study, interaction is used as an umbrella term for all kinds of talk (see

Goffman 1981). As for dialogue, it is generally defined as "any talk to which two or more people contribute" (van Lier 1996: 166). In this work, dialogue is a planned and intentional problem-solving interaction. As such, it can be monologue in the sense of asking oneself questions while reflecting silently or out loud. An authentic dialogue is defined as "a straightforward discussion of ideas in which people are seeking mutual understanding" (Graman cited in van Lier 1996: 141).

In section 3.3.1.3, I presented and evaluated the notion of "interactive professionalism", finding it valuable in the context of innovation in this study. Also, writing on research and innovation, Huberman (1993b) explains his hypothesis of "sustained interactivity", which "involves multiple exchanges between researchers and potential 'users' of research at different phases of the study" (pp. 36-37): before it takes place, during implementation, and in the write-up stage. This concept proved to be of potential benefit in this study.

The concepts of "interactive professionalism" and "sustained interactivity" were operationalised through the "focus group" procedure. This has been defined as "a carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a ... non-threatening environment" (Krueger 1994: 6). The area of interest is defined by the moderator or researcher. Discussion groups in this sense are influenced by at least three main factors: (a) situational constraints; (b) the moderator/researcher's intervention; and (c) the topic discussed. Therefore, if the moderator is a researcher, she/he should acknowledge the influence of these factors on participants' interaction. In this study, I have used the term "discussion circle" (DC) instead of "focus group" to highlight symmetrical relationships and eliminate indications of hierarchical ones. Interaction and dialogue in the DC indicate appropriate methodology. As we know, reading and discussion, are integral parts of AR, communicative methodology, and academic writing pedagogy (Swales 1990a: Hamp-Lyons and Heasley 1987; Murray 1992; Flower 1993; Swales and Freak 1994; Jordan 1997).

4.4.5 Reflection and Evaluation

In AR, in general, reflection and evaluation are integral elements in the process (see Hall 1996; Winter 1989, 1996). Stake (1995: 50) believes that research "expertise comes largely through reflective practice", and Brumfit and Mitchell (1990b: 10) see research as "a type of contemplation". For Elliott (1991: 38) "Reflective practice implies reflexivity", which he defines as "self-awareness". "[A]wareness," he believes, "brings with it insights into the way in which the self in action is shaped and constrained by institutional structures ...". Therefore, in Elliott's view, "Reflexive practice necessarily implies both self-critique and institutional critique" (see 3.5.3 and 3.5.5).

Evaluation and management are also integral parts of the AR process (see 4.3.3). In ELT projects, in particular, some kind of evaluation is needed to manage the process and assess project worth (see Beretta and Davies 1985; Woods 1988; Weir and Roberts 1992; Williams and Burden 1994). Currently, evaluation is encouraged for developmental purposes (Rea-Dickins and Germaine 1992; Brown 1995; Lamb 1995), and teachers are increasingly involved in the evaluation process as a result of awareness about the centrality of their role (see Hopkins 1988; Germaine and Rea-Dickins 1995; and see also Rea-Dickins and Germaine 1998a and b; Kiely 1998; Holliday 1998). Hopkins (1989: 5) addresses his book to teachers "who are or will be interested in becoming curriculum evaluators". He argues that educational "evaluation needs to be linked to development" (p. 3). Wolcott's advice is useful for EFL researchers who need to operate in contexts where evaluation of teaching or the teacher is not a norm, as is the case in the context of this study (see 1.3.2 and 8.6.2):

> When the researcher prefers not to assume the role of evaluator, an alternative approach is to include within the purview of the research how those immediately involved or affected evaluate what is going on, the researcher acting as information processor (Wolcott 1994: 34).

This advice has been followed in this study. Both formative and summative evaluation was carried out (see Rea 1983; Rea-Dickins 1994; Rea-Dickins and Lwaitama 1995). Because of the participants' sensitivity to the term "evaluation", "feedback" was used instead (see Elley 1989; Swales 1990b; Werner and Case 1991).

Risk-taking is usually related to reflection and reflexivity (Elliott 1991). It is a valued learning strategy in communicative methodology (Morrow 1981) and, by implication, for teacher learning, particularly when innovation is involved (see 3.3.1.2; 3.3.1.3; 3.3.1.4). An AR orientation involves a great deal of risk-taking. The reason, Winter (1996: 23) explains, is that research "can be seen as a threat to all the taken-for-granted processes ...". Relating risk to reflection and reflexivity, he reminds us that in AR researchers are not only submitting "others' accounts to critique" but also their own. He adds: "We are part of the situation undergoing change. ... we want to change because we want to learn".

Because risk is always involved in doing AR, certain abilities, competencies, or motivations are needed. Elliott (1991: 128-34) summarizes them under three clusters: "*cognitive abilities*", "*interpersonal abilities*" and "*achievement motivation*" (italics in original). McNiff (1988) also writes about the importance of communicative competence.

In this study, the teachers were not instructed in the art of reflection, reflexivity, or risk-taking. But through project methodology, the theoretical input/readings, and TAR, these qualities were acquired or enhanced in several of the teachers involved.

Several objects were the focus of critical reflection and evaluation: project materials and ideas, TD activities, project methodology, one's own learning, objectivity of teacher feedback, project management, etc. Chapters Five, Six, and Seven provide many examples of reflection, reflexivity, and risk-taking.

4.4.6 Analysis, Feedback, and Categorisation

This section describes the procedures and methods used for data analysis, feedback from and to the participants, and categorisation. The section provides a rationale for these processes and their application in the present study.

4.4.6.1 Analysis

Data analysis is given special attention in qualitative studies (see Bryman and Burgess 1994a and b). In my reading about this topic, I found Huberman and Miles's "interim analysis" and "iterative research" appropriate for the aims of this study. "Interim analysis" was useful for ongoing reporting to colleagues and getting formative feedback/evaluation from them on the different project activities in which they participated (see 4.5.3.1 and 4.5.4.2). "Interim analysis," Huberman and Miles (1994: 431) point out, is "peculiar" to the "life cycles" of qualitative research, where "collection and analysis" spread "throughout a study". It "calls for different modes of inquiry at different" stages of the research process (see section 4.5.4 for application).

Interim analysis has advantages and disadvantages. The advantages are that "errors in the field can be undone the next time out" and "instrumentation can be adjusted and added to" as needs arise (*ibid.* 431). Huberman and Miles add that such an adjustment, in line with greater appreciation of contextual factors, increases internal validity (see also Janesick 1994). The main disadvantage of interim analysis is gathering more and more data; "the more one investigates, the more layers of the setting one discovers" (*ibid.*: 431; see also Holliday 1991a). It is an endless process. This is particularly true in action research, which is cyclic in nature. One or more cycles are involved, depending on the nature of the research problem and the time available for research. This study covered one cycle in its Main Phase, which had three clear stages: orientation, research and reporting, and summative evaluation and follow-up (see 1.6.2 and 4.5.4).

As for "iterative research", it is common in AR. The methods used are consistent with the "grounded theory" approach (see Strauss and Corbin 1994). According to Huberman and Miles (1994: 431), researchers use certain procedures to "uncover ... constructs". They describe such procedures as "a succession of question-and-answer cycles". The conclusions researchers make in such a way, they argue, "are deemed 'valid' in the relaxed sense that they are probable, reasonable, or likely to be true" (*ibid.*). This procedure was followed in the formative evaluation of TD

activities, which were, in turn, evaluated in a summative manner (see 4.5.3.1; 4.5.4.5; and 4.5.3.3). Both formative and summative findings were reported to the participants, and sometimes feedback on feedback was sought to check on participants' objectivity by looking at it through their own lenses as a group rather than the eye of the researcher (see section 5.5.1, for example). Since a multi-tool methodology was used for data collection, several types of analysis were needed: inductive, deductive, comparative, within and across case, cause-effect relationships, etc. (see Miles and Huberman 1994; see also section 4.4.6.3 on categorisation).

4.4.6.2 Feedback

In this study, feedback from and to participants is a basic research and development strategy (see 4.5.4.2; 4.5.4.3; and 4.5.4.4; 4.5.4.6). As I have explained (4.4.6.1), it was part of the interim analysis process. McNiff (1988: 70) makes the point that even though regular reports will not be heard or read by as many participants as hoped, nevertheless

> If people see that their opinions are catered for and valued, they will participate gladly, make constructive rather than destructive comments and seek personally to move the whole project forward.

I have found Hopkins's feedback criteria in relation to classroom observation useful and consistent with the aims of this study. He (1993: 80-82) suggests a three-phased classroom observation cycle that includes a "*planning meeting*, "*the classroom observation*", and the "*feedback discussion*" (italics in original). Hopkins points out that interpretation of classroom data should first come from the teacher observed. He mentions seven criteria of "appropriate feedback". Three of them were applied in this study. In his view, feedback works "best" if it is (a) "given within 24 hours of observation"; (b) "based on factual data"; and (c) "given as part of a two-way discussion".

4.4.6.3 Categorisation and Related Issues

Categorisation is related to analysis and is given special attention in qualitative studies. Writers on data analysis (see, for example, Bryman and Burgess 1994a; Strauss and Corbin 1994; Janesick 1994; Wolcott 1994; Huberman and Miles 1994) mention several approaches for generating categories from the data. The ones frequently mentioned are: grounded theory, study design, research aims and questions, grand theory, data displays, and conceptual mapping.

The grounded theory approach is widely adopted in qualitative studies currently, and I have found it useful for inductively deriving categories from certain types of data (recordings, interviews, conference papers, diaries). "Grounded theory," write Strauss and Corbin (1994: 273), "is a *general methodology* for developing theory that is grounded in data systematically gathered and analyzed" (italics in original). This takes place both during and at the end of the study. Throughout fieldwork, there is a constant interplay between data collection and data analysis. Emerging conclusions or hypotheses are verified through checking them again and again "for the most common or most insidious biases that can steal into the process of drawing conclusions" (Huberman and Miles 1994: 438). Huberman and Miles (1994: 438, citing several sources) mention a number of threats to the verification process, e.g., "data overload", "salience of first impressions", "selectivity", and "unreliability of information from certain sources".

To overcome such threats, Huberman and Miles (*ibid.*: 439) recommend "'transparency' of Method". They point out that

> The conventions of qualitative research require clear, explicit reporting of data and procedures. That is expected so that (a) the reader will be confident of, and can verify, reported conclusions; (b) secondary analysis of the data is possible; (c) the study could in principle be replicated; and (d) fraud and misconduct, if it exists, will be more trackable. (*ibid.*)

The writers go on to mention another "internal need: keeping analytic strategies coherent, manageable, repeatable as the study proceeds" (*ibid.*). They also suggest

several areas that require attention: sampling, drawing inferences, structuring of categories, justifying study decisions and "methodological shifts", giving equal weight to different voices, searching for "negative cases", "feeling of empathy", giving feedback to participants, peer reviewing, and spending "adequate time in the field" (Huberman and Miles 1994: 439). These suggestions were heeded in this study to the extent the context of research and its actors allowed (Chapters 5, 6. and 7).

It is currently argued that researchers should make clear to readers how they have derived their categories and guarded against researcher bias. In this study, I relied on project design (phases, stages, aims, questions, etc.) and also on the grounded theory and conceptual mapping approaches to guide my category derivation. I used inductive methods in analysing ethnographic data (interview, participant observation, diaries, etc.) and verified emerging hypotheses through deductive methods, using questionnaires.

Miles and Huberman (1994) observe that "study design decisions can, in a real sense, be seen as analytic" (1994: 16) and that these determine to a large extent the research techniques and procedures. Designing the project in two phases, each of which has certain stages, implied a the need for early rough decisions on procedures for data analysis. However, design decisions rarely, if ever, go directly as planned. This is not peculiar to AR (see 4.4.1). Miles and Huberman (1994: 17) point out that in qualitative enquiry, "instruments ... should be derived from the properties of the setting and its actors' view of them". Thus my decision to depend on recordings, short feedback questionnaires, and feedback on feedback responses as main research and development tools emerged as a necessity as it was unethical to strain the already overloaded teachers with time-consuming methods, e.g., interviews following each activity or video-taping.

Janesick (1994) recommends inductive and comparative analysis. I have found these useful for the final analysis (see Chapter 6). The process and methods of data analysis required a great deal of reflection and decision-making, and advice was sought from different sources. I fully transcribed all the recordings of TD meetings/activities. The total for both phases ran into about 250 hand-written pages and an almost similar

amount for the interviews. This took time, but the process was highly educative and insightful, in many ways similar to a redoing of the field work but in a relaxed manner. For the final analysis of transcripts, I relied on some expert "travellers' tales and a few tips" (K. Richards 1996: 57). I used highlighter pens of different colours for indicating recurrent themes, which I then fed into the word processor and printed out for critical reading and further reduction. My focus was content analysis (themes and topics), not discourse analysis (see Nelson 1993 and Myers 1998). My baseline interview with the Centre Director (Appendix 2.7) gives an idea of how I divided the interview under themes and topics, leaving the integrity of the text intact, except for the parts that might reveal the participants' identities, a big challenge in case study research.

As for the questionnaires, the task was easier. I used cutting and pasting for grouping answers to each question separately, starting with the most experienced teachers and ending with the least experienced. In this way, I was able to identify themes, patterns, similarities and differences between different groups of teachers (e.g., experienced and novices; presenters and audience; readers and non-readers; teachers and administrators, full participants and occasional ones, and so on). Selection of evidence was based on what questions I decided to answer. Like data analysis, the questions were also progressively refined and focused (Miles and Huberman 1994). I started with seven questions and ended with five in the final stage. Because the research was process-oriented, permission from the University was sought for an extension of the word limit. This was granted, giving me 40,000 extra words for appendices and other data. Samples of data analysis are shown in Appendices 4.1 and 4.2. The former shows questionnaire analysis and the latter exemplifies how diary entries were classified under themes for retrieval (see also Appendix 2.7). A similar procedure was followed for other classroom and participant observation notes. Numbers (e.g., percentages) are sometimes used to enhance the credibility of qualitative evidence.

Regarding the issue of selectivity in the final analysis, I was well aware of its challenges and values throughout my write up. In selecting evidence to present in data boxes in Chapters Five and Seven, therefore, I deliberately presented and highlighted

the discordant voices. If there were any omissions in the process of data reduction, they took place at the expense of supporting voices because these were the majority. In a few cases, sensitive comments made by either parties (supporters and resistors) were omitted in the final write up because they might impact negatively on future relationships at the Centre. This, I hope, the readers of this work will appreciate in the light of project aims and objectives and the aim of research in general. Since each project activity was evaluated *only* by its participants, responses to feedback questionnaires came mainly from participants who were intrinsically motivated. Indeed, in some cases, occasional participants failed to return the questionnaires, and it was unethical to press them to do so (see 7.1).

In seeking exemplary models of AR write-ups, I found Wolcott's (1994: 399) advice to novice researchers insightful, and I tried to heed it as much as I could:

> Poorly executed and poorly presented studies often serve as excellent models, especially if they leave you determined to do better. Be critical in your assessment of the work of others. Trust your intuition, but subject it to thoughtful examination: What is it about a study that turns you on? Or off? What various sequences and proportions among description, analysis, and interpretation for handling particular kinds of data or addressing particular kinds of problems?

4.5 Action: Research *and* Development

This section looks at different aspects of the action part of this developmental study: the approach in practice, the participants and their roles, TD activities, tools and procedures, and the main problems and their management.

4.5.1 The Approach in Practice

I have mentioned that the research approach used in this study is ethnographic action research (AR in short), a modified version of Holliday's approach (see 4.3.3). McNiff's *Action Research: Principles and Practice* (1988) was my guide because the

"generative" approach it advocates embodies the majority of the principles that underpin this study. As will be seen in the results chapters, McNiff's "generative form" (see 4.2) manifested clearly in action. For example, several strategies used in the second-order AR were adopted by colleagues in their (first-order) AR. One good example is investigating learners' needs. Almost all the teachers who carried out AR within this project started by investigating their students' needs and wants and intervened accordingly (see Chapter 6).

Regarding the AR procedure (see 3.5.2.2), the guide for the second-order AR was Nunan's spiral (1992). But within Nunan's spiral, McNiff's spin-off generative procedure was useful in dealing with problems as they arose. As for the first-order AR, the teachers needed a structured approach initially, and, as I anticipated, Richards and Lockhart's procedure for beginner action researchers served them well at the start (see 3.5.2.2).

4.5.2 The Participants and Their Roles

Research participants in the Main Phase included teachers, administrators, and the principal teacher-researcher. This section gives information on who they were; their personal, academic, and professional profiles; and how their self-selected roles in the Baseline Phase have evolved and manifested during the conduct of the study.

As I have mentioned in Chapter Two, 17 teachers and three administrators signed up for the project. This was significant in view of the fact that the entire staff numbered about 30 then. Participants' number, however, dropped to 11 at the start of fieldwork of the Main Phase because of staff loss. Seven teachers left the Centre for various reasons (study, family, job transfer, etc.), and two experienced teachers dropped out. With some effort to motivate the teachers, the number rose to 20 (out of a total of 23 present then). The strategies used to motivate the teachers and get administrative support were embedded in the concept of dialectics (4.4.3) and relied on interaction and dialogue (4.4.4). This increase in participation was unexpected because all the teachers were overloaded with teaching responsibilities in addition to engaging them with two projects, the MEP and the CAWRP, which were run simultaneously.

Document review upon arrival in the field showed that the MEP was initiated at the start of term (29 august 1996), when the teachers were supposed to be preparing for their roles in the CAWRP (see 4.3.1).

Tables 4.1 a, b, and c give information about the participants' ages, qualifications, and teaching experience.

Table 4.1 Participants' Personal, Academic, and Professional Profiles

a) Age Range

Age Range	22-29	30-39	40-49	50+
No. of Teachers	8	3	5	4

b) Academic Qualifications

Qualification	BA	Diploma	MA	PhD
No. of Teachers	5	10	4	1

c) APP/ESP Teaching Experience

Experience in Years	None	Less than one year	2-4	5-9	10-14	15 +
APP	4	1	9	2	4	0
ESP	0	1	10	4	5	0

The following factual information about the participants is relevant and has influenced the study's process and outcome:

- All (except one expatriate) are Syrians.
- All (except the expatriate teacher) studied English language and literature in the English Department, Damascus University, and gained degrees (BAs, postgraduate

diplomas) from the same Department.

- Four had degrees in applied linguistics, three from the UK. The rest had received little or no preparation in ELT in the sense of certificated study. Most of their teaching knowledge was experience-based.
- Nine of the 20 were experienced (more than five years of teaching experience). All nine had experience in teaching English at schools or private language institutes before joining the ESPC. Their average teaching experience was 22.4 years.
- Novices were a majority. The average experience of this group was 2.1 years.
- Fifteen were females and five males. The latter were the most overloaded with additional teaching responsibilities and other jobs at and outside of the Centre.

For the purpose of final analysis and presentation, the 20 participants have been classified into three categories, according to their participation. Table 4.2 presents this classification and the participants' pseudonyms.

Table 4.2 Classification of Project Participants

Type of Participant	Experienced	Novice
• Full	1. Jihad 2. Noor 3. Shehab 4. Sada	1. Sadik 2. Ola 3. Reem 4. Abeer
• Moderate	1. Rose 2. Sonia 3. Mustafa	1. Salma 2. Hind 3. Doha
• Occasional	1. Thana 2. Hanan	1. Rola 2. Paul 3. Shaza 4. Ameen

a) **Full participants:** Eight teachers are full participants. This means they attended all or at least five out of a total of seven project meetings in the Main Phase. The two basic criteria for the term "full participant" is that the teacher has carried out classroom research and reported on it at least once. Seven of the eight full participants were involved in the baseline study and signed up for the project. Abeer was newly recruited and was still being trained by Rose (Table 4.2).

b) **Moderate participants:** This category includes six teachers. The basic criterion is that they have attended fully at least four out of the seven meetings in the Main Phase. Overall, they were active in the Orientation Stage but did not carry out classroom research in the second stage, or, if they did, were unable to report on it and discuss it with the group (see section 6.2 for more details).

c) **Occasional participants:** These are six teachers whose attendance was occasional and/or partial. They attended one to three meetings in this manner. The participants assumed different and complementary roles in the process of implementation. The responsibility for providing time, space, material incentives, and opportunities for teacher learning was that of the Centre Director in collaboration with the CAWRP initiator. Leading, managing, and evaluating the learning process was done individually and collectively by the teachers involved in the particular activity. Collecting information, analysing the data, providing feedback (on feedback), and facilitating the process of teacher learning was the principal researcher's responsibility.

In addition to research responsibilities and facilitating the teacher researchers, I was a participant and did all the tasks my colleagues needed to do, including teaching the APP and carrying out classroom research (see 6.2). My role was flexible and responsive to the participants' and context needs and exigencies. At times I was the teachers' ambassador to the Director's Office, negotiating space and time to complete our research. I was a persistent negotiator and sometimes demanded explanations for

unexpected behaviour (see 8.3.3, for example). This put great strain on me and the Director as both of us struggled in the change process to balance our liberating and controlling powers and try to understand each other's perspective by going outside our respective horizons (see 4.3.1). As Holliday (1994, p. 27, citing Giellner) points out "'erosion of the given" can cause "tremendous strain and interpersonal friction" .

4.5.3 Teacher Development Tools and Procedures

Each stage of the project had its own development tools and procedures. This section provides the necessary details.

4.5.3.1 Orientation Activities

The Materials: Rationale of Selection and Procedure

Materials are instrumental in bringing about development in learners, whether teachers or students. In his experience of training EFL teachers and supervisors in Egypt, Doff (1987: 67), for example, points out that inservice materials can be used "as an instrument for methodological change". In his view, they can play the important role of filling in a "conceptual gap" that exists between progressive and conservative positions on language teaching. But finding appropriate TD materials for ESP TD is a problem reported in the literature (see British Council 1980; Cortese 1985; Jarvis 1987; Cross 1987; Jackson 1998).

In selecting project materials, I was guided by my context knowledge and teaching experience, which were enriched by my inservice training at Warwick University and the study I carried out on academic writing (see 1.5 and 1.6). The principles of "relevance and authenticity" (see 4.3.2) and "appropriate methodology" (see 4.3.3) were also useful. Nine papers on current approaches and practices in teaching academic writing were selected in addition to McNiff's *Action Research: Principles and Practice* (1988). Upon the teachers' request, I mailed the materials to the Centre six weeks before the start of term in the 1996-1997 academic year so that they would have time to read and reflect on the ideas. In my letters to the Director and

other participants, I explained the rationale on which the materials selection was made (see 4.3.1) and allocated the articles and tasks to colleagues, depending on their own choices of their preferred activity. I also included some suggestions on how to read the articles and evaluate their relevance to the context (more on this later). For research purposes, a response sheet was also attached (see Appendix 4.3).

The Activities: Rationale, Aims, and Procedure

Three learning activities were selected from those mentioned in the TD literature resource books (see Wallace 1991) to help the teachers get optimal benefit from the input/readings . The activities were stage-related and task-based (see Parrott 1993).

Table 4.3 shows the Main Phase study stages and their related TD activities.

Table 4.3 Main Phase Stages and Related Development Activities

Stage and Timeline	**Development Activities, Procedures, Strategies**
Stage 1: *Orientation* (Nov. 1996-Jan. 1997)	• Individual critical literature reading • Discussion circles (DCs) • Oral presentations (OPs) • Action research workshop (ARW) • Feedback from and to participants • Critical reflection and evaluation
Stage 2: *Research and Reporting* (Jan.-Mar. 1997)	• Literature critical reading and evaluation • Data collection and analysis • Progress reporting (oral and/or written) • Consultation with peers/supervisors • Diary writing • Feedback from and to participants • Classroom observation • Conference paper writing • Conference presentations
Stage 3: *Summative Evaluation and Follow up* (Feb.-Dec. 1997	• Summative reflections and feedback on project effects on teacher learning • "Sustained interactivity"

As can be seen, there were three main TD activities in the Orientation Stage :

a) Discussion Circles (DCs): Two DCs were scheduled to take place in the programme, each of which focused on certain articles or article. Input came through individual critical reading, followed by whole group discussion in the DC, which was led by one or two group leaders/moderators, selected from among the participants. This design is in line with the principle of appropriate methodology (section 4.3.3). Table 4.4 gives some factual information about the two DCs: number of participants and readers and the focus.

Table 4.4 The Discussion Circles

Activity & Date	No. of Participants	No. of Readers	Focus
DC1 (28 Nov. 1996)	16	5	• White (1988). Academic writing: process and product. • Bloor and St. John (1988). Project writing: The marriage of process and product.
DC2 (16 Jan. 1997)	15	11	• Campbell (1990). Writing with others' words

As this table shows, attendance rate was high but reading rate was minimal in DC1, the first project activity. This was because of contextual constraints (overload, exam time, etc.). Reading increased later. One reason could be increased awareness after experiencing the activities and finding them useful (see 5.4.1; 5.4.3; and 5.5.2.1).

b) Oral Presentations (OPs): Four OPs took place, all based on critical reading and evaluation of published papers on writing methodology. The teachers who opted for the OP activities read the articles, evaluated the ideas for relevance and viability and presented them to colleagues, who discussed them together in the discussion part of the OP. Oral presentations are part of our ESP courses (see 1.4.3 and 2.5.1.3), so the

selection of this medium of teacher learning is also underpinned by the principle of "appropriate methodology (see 4.3.3) and the maxim of "Practise what you preach" (see 3.4.2.3). Two OPs were collaborative (COPs), led by a pair of teachers for each article, and two were individual (IOPs), depending on the presenters' preferences (see Table 4.5 for factual information).

Table 4.5 The Oral Presentation Activities

Type of OP	Date	No. of Participants	No. of readers	Presenter (s)	Author, topic & source
COP 1	12 Dec. 1996	16	11	Ola & Sadik	Mangelsdorf, K. (1992). Peer reviews. *ELT J.*
COP 2	12 Dec. 1996	16	11	Salma & Reem	Charles, M. (1990). Self- monitoring. *ELT J.*
IOP1	19 Dec. 1996	14	5	Nidal	Salager-Meyer, F. (1994). Hedges in medical articles *ESP J.*
IOP 2	16 Jan. 1997	15	11	Paul	Pennycook, A. (1996). "Borrowing others' words". *TESOL Q.*

The DCs and OPs had the following aims:

- to develop participants' awareness of process, product concept and related practices and writing conventions (e.g., feedback, plagiarism);
- to encourage them to introduce classroom innovations embedded in the papers;
- to stimulate and sharpen their critical reflection and evaluation of the materials, their beliefs and attitudes, project methodology, their learning, etc.;
- to encourage teacher research through providing published research models; and
- to help bridging the gap between theory and practice.

In allocating the articles, I took the particular teacher's or teachers' academic and professional potential and needs into consideration. The article on "hedges in

medical articles", for example, was allocated to an experienced colleague, who is also a specialist in pragmatics and was, therefore, knowledgeable about and interested in the topic (see 5.2.1.1). On the other hand, the article on "peer reviews" was allocated to two motivated novice teachers, one of whom disbelieved in rewriting (see 2.5.2.2 and 6.4.1.1). It was hoped that the article would raise his awareness and transform his belief, among other things (see 5.3.2 and 7.2.1).

In a letter to the teachers in the Baseline Phase follow-up period, dated 4 August 1996, I provided some suggestions on how to get optimal benefit from the articles and encouraged them at the same time to be creative and organise their tasks as they saw desirable:

> It is up to you how to divide the roles amongst yourselves and how to organise the activity. Presentations of this kind were given at the Centre for English Language Teacher Education ... during the course I followed in 1995. Depending on my experience, I recommend the following procedure:
>
> 1. Introduction: It gives an idea of what the presentation is about, how it is structured, and who will present what;
> 2. Bibliographical data: topics, writers, journal, place and date of publication;
> 3. Research data: Place of research, subjects, methodology, findings (briefly);
> 4. Critical evaluation in relation to applicability ... in our context; and
> 5. Discussion with the audience (the teachers).

c) Action Research Workshop (ARW): The ARW was led by five teachers, four experienced and one novice. Its aim was to raise the teachers' awareness about TAR in preparation for carrying out research in Stage Two. The focus was on five topics, each of which was allocated to one teacher to prepare for and present to the group in a collaborative workshop: (a) aims and usefulness of TAR; (b) collaboration and self-evaluation; (c) techniques and procedures; (d) constraints on TAR and their management; and (e) focusing AR topics. The same principles that underpinned the DCs and OPs applied to the ARW. Table 4.6 presents more details.

Table 4.6 The Action Research Workshop

Date	Time	No. of Participants	Leaders	Material Sources
9 Jan. 1997	105 mins.	16	Jihad, Noor, Shehab, Rola, Sada	Miscellaneous, including • McNiff (1988) • Richards and Lockhart (1994) • Chamot (1995) • Classroom data • Handouts

Time and space turned out to be the most constrained resources in implementing those TD activities. The time agreed in the baseline follow-up period was sometimes reduced substantially to allow for MEP meetings (see 5.2.2, for example). All staff meetings were held on Thursday, the day allocated for staff development meetings. Other days were fully occupied by teaching.

Methodological principles were implied in the suggestions on the way the materials needed to be read and in the modes selected for teacher learning. In Chapter Three (section 3.3.2.3), it is argued that rote learning is of little relevance to the needs of EFL teachers, and interpretation is suggested as a better alternative. In view of the fact that we are required to promote learner autonomy and train our students to do the tasks themselves, experiential learning was needed by both students and teachers (see 2.6). In this way, the methodology selected for the TD activities encouraged the teachers to shoulder responsibility for their own learning by carrying out the tasks themselves in ways similar to what we required students to do.

4.5.3.2 Teacher Action Research and Reporting

By the end of the Orientation Stage, nine teachers, including myself, chose to carry out classroom research. At this stage, my role and that of the research aimed at:

- helping the teachers locate relevant and interesting topics for research in their own classrooms and facilitating the implementation of TAR;
- monitoring and documenting the process of teacher learning;
- providing the teachers with a supportive environment that would stimulate their genuine voices;
- encouraging colleagues who participated in the Orientation Stage activities to act as critical friends to colleagues who chose to carry out AR;
- supporting the implementation of team writing and related activities in ways that secure students' freedom to choose whether to team-write or not;
- providing opportunities for critical reflection and evaluation and the sharing and critiquing of teacher action research in a supportive environment;
- encouraging, supporting and facilitating conference paper writing and reporting; and
- negotiating time and space allocations for TAR and the needed staff meetings.

4.5.3.3 Summative Evaluation and Follow-up

Research in this stage aimed at:

- investigating, through the participants' views, to what extent and for what reason(s) the project had been able or unable to meet their needs;
- investigating their views regarding the extent of project success or failure and what they believed were the main constraints and resources;
- discovering what their next action plan was regarding TAR at the Centre; and investigating whether the teacher-researchers' action plans and their suggestions were implemented in practice.

4.5.4 Research Tools and Procedures

As I have pointed out (4.3.3 and 4.3.5), a multi-method approach to data collection was believed to be necessary. The tools were stage-related and integrated with TD

activities. Table 4.7 on the next page shows the range of instruments and procedures relevant to each of the three stages, and the following sections present the necessary details.

4.5.4.1 Transcripts of Recorded Meetings

Audio-taping is recommended in AR, where discussion, interaction, and dialogue are used for the purpose of research and development (see McNiff 1988, 1992).

Seven TD meetings took place in this study. Five were recorded and transcribed by the researcher, two during the process of implementation and three after the completion of fieldwork. Fieldnotes were also taken in conjunction with the recording for fear of power cuts, a common phenomenon in our part of the world. This happened once while the AR workshop was being run, and the fieldnotes taken were used as the basis on which the details of the workshop were described in the research diary. Similarly, nine meetings with the Centre Director took place in her office, each of approximately one hour. Seven were audio-taped and transcribed in full after fieldwork had ended. All the recordings were listened to, sometimes more than once, while fieldwork was progressing. On the basis of this listening, strategies and procedures were modified, as needed, and generated hypotheses were tested by collecting more data (see 4.4.6).

4.5.4.2 Feedback Questionnaires

Like recordings, feedback questionnaires were a major source of data in this study. They were found to be appropriate research and development tools, mainly for ethical and practical considerations (see 4.3.4 and 4.4.6). Every project activity was evaluated for its usefulness and effectiveness by a short questionnaire after it had taken place. A combination of multiple choice format and open-ended commentary to justify the choice or selection of stance, belief, or attitude was often used. Such formative feedback questionnaires proved to be useful for the purpose of reporting back to colleagues on their overall collective evaluation of their learning and other matters. The multiple choice format was convenient for collating the findings quantitatively and

supporting them with qualitative comments. Feedback sheets reported the findings to the teachers descriptively with minimal commentary on my part in order not to influence teachers' reflections on and critical evaluation of the collective feedback: its objectivity and credibility in their views. This feedback on feedback was felt to be needed in view of the Director's challenge to the objectivity of questionnaire data (see section 7.2.2).

Table 4.7 Stage-Related Research and Development Tools

Stage	Research and Development Tools
A. Orientation	• initial individual literature reading response sheet • informal interviews with a random sample of teachers • recordings of professional activities • feedback questionnaires • feedback-on-feedback questionnaires • project documents (memos, announcements, handouts, etc.) • fieldnotes and the researcher's diary
B. Research and Reporting	• recordings of professional development activities • feedback questionnaires • participants' research records (diaries) • classroom observation notes • participants' conference abstracts/papers • recorded meetings with the Director • fieldnotes and the researcher's diary • project documents
C. Summative Evaluation and Follow up	• summative feedback questionnaire • end-of-project interviews • recorded meetings with the Director • formal and informal written communication with the Centre Director and teachers

In addition to formative feedback, summative evaluation was needed. While formative feedback was activity-related, the summative one looked at all the activities experienced in the Orientation Stage. Appendix 4.4 shows samples of formative and summative Orientation Stage feedback questionnaires, and Appendix 4.5 presents a sample feedback sheet.

The project was evaluated by its participants through the Summative Feedback Questionnaire and follow-up interviews (see next section). Since Chapter Seven is substantially based on this questionnaire, it is necessary to describe it briefly here and show it in full in the appendix. Following the bio-data section, Part One covered general statements of values and beliefs and used the "agree" "disagree" format. It was intended to inform and enlighten Part Two, the main one: "Teacher Evaluation of the CAWRP". One section in Part Two aimed at evaluating the constraints that emerged in project data to have influenced the project. Among the constraints I included "Errors committed by the project initiator" and asked the respondents to elaborate on it. Appendix 4.6 shows the Summative Feedback Questionnaire.

Moreover, about the end of fieldwork I designed a Student Questionnaire, which aimed at investigating students' perspectives of the classroom innovations. This was not allowed by the administration, saying that teachers protested against it. This claim was not substantiated in the data except in the case of three teachers who resisted the innovations. The majority agreed to distribute it in their classes without any conditions. Eventually, the questionnaire was distributed only in my class (see Appendix 4.7).

Feedback questionnaires used in the manner described in this section proved to be generally effective in generating teacher trust, reflection, reflexivity, and a spirit of exploration (see 8.3.2 for discussion). Feedback on feedback questionnaires were useful for obtaining data on teacher receptivity and level of credibility in the project methodology. Moreover, a two-way *written* feedback strategy (from and to the participants) required constant data analysis and reporting and was ethically appropriate in view of the teachers' overload as a result of involving them in two projects at the same time. Similarly, a two-way *oral* feedback strategy in my meetings with the

Director emerged as a necessity in view of her overload and lack of trust in questionnaire data (see 5.5.1; 6.4.2.2; 7.2.2). Feedback questionnaires were also used in the follow-up period with the Director's consent (see Appendix 4.8).

4.5.4.3 Interviews and Telephone Communication

In-depth interviewing was a major source of data in the Baseline Phase (see 2.4.2.1). However, in the Main Phase, interviews were not possibly on ethical grounds (see also 4.3.3 and 4.3.4 for principles). Telephone communication at off-duty times emerged as a necessity to make up for lack of opportunities to talk in the work place because of overload and other constraints (see 4.5.6.2). Such contacts served different needs such as:

- clarifying points not clearly expressed in teachers' responses to questionnaires and/or getting teachers' answers to questions they had forgotten to answer;
- discussing field problems and eliciting respondents' point of views to solve them;
- getting and giving feedback on the progress of teacher research/writing and dealing with problems as they arose; and notifying participants about urgent meetings, sudden changes in schedules, etc.

Telephone communication is mentioned in the TD literature (see George 1994). It was endorsed by all the CAWRP participants in the ethical code meeting (see 4.5.5) in view of contextual constraints. It has proved to be valuable for both research and development. Useful information was recorded in my research diary.

Five full-participant teacher-researchers were interviewed to follow-up the Summative Feedback Questionnaire, and it was not possible to interview others because of project arrest. Appendix 4.9 shows the interview questions, but these were not adhered to literally as others emerged in the interview process.

4.5.4.4 Diaries

I kept a diary and encouraged my colleagues to do so. In my case, I had two diaries, one for my classroom research and the other for the second-order AR. I shared the former with my colleagues, and some of them shared theirs with me. In my diaries, I recorded my personal observations, reflections, feelings, and interpretation of events, and read and reread what I had written regularly, looking for connection between events and watching my own responses and reactions. I used the term "research records" for colleagues' diaries because "diary" in Arabic implies highly personal information. In the AR workshop, the teachers received a handout that rationalized the use of diaries/research records in TAR and were given complete freedom for sharing them with colleagues, including the researcher. All the researchers kept diaries and all except one made them available to me, wholly or in part.

4.5.4.5 Participant Observation

Participant observation was used as a complementary tool. Carr and Kemmis (1986: 28) distinguish between "Participant-observer" and "observer-participant". In the former, "the observer attempts to participate in the situation" but exercises "caution about the degree to which his or her presence will influence it" (*ibid.*). In the latter, the observer acts as a full participant.

In this study both types of observation were used, depending on the situation, the aim of observation, the wishes of the research participants, or my role in the particular activity. In observing planning meetings in which the teachers discussed their collaborative contributions (e.g., oral presentation), I acted as a participant-observer, taking notes in conjunction with recording if the teachers concerned consented to the recording. However, I behaved as an observer-participant in the AR workshop planning meeting because the teachers allocated one part of the workshop to me in place of two teachers who had dropped out. In the following extract from the transcripts of the meeting, Noor is suggesting roles and responsibilities for the AR workshop, based on the suggestions sent to the teachers in the baseline follow-up period (see 4.5.3.1c):

Noor: ... I don't mind taking 1 and 2: Aims and usefulness of action research. Jihad might want to take 3: techniques and instruments; Hind, you might want to take 4: collaboration and self-evaluation in action research; Shehab will take number 5: constraints on action research; and the last one: focusing your research topic, who should take it?
Hind (smiling): This last one should be for you, Sada, because you tried action research; we didn't.
Sada: I don't mind if you want to give me a role.
Hind: Why not? It is better if someone experienced talks about it. So this is for Sada (section 6) ...

4.5.4.6 Classroom Observation

In the Main Phase, the plan was to observe two APP sessions for each teacher, one in the Orientation and the other in the Research and Reporting Stage. However, because of contextual constraints, I was able to observe only once in ten APP classrooms. Out of 14 APP teachers, 12 consented to my request to observe their classes (Appendix 4.10). Colleagues who resisted the innovations showed signs of reluctance to allow classroom observation and were not observed. On the other hand, three novice teacher-researchers requested my observation as a peer, mostly as part of their research. I also invited colleagues to observe my class for the same reason. Hopkins's (1993) procedure and criteria for classroom observation were adapted (see 4.4.6.2). The main aim of observation was to look for signs of transfer from project input into classroom methodology, particularly in relation to team writing (the innovation) and its effect on classroom culture. Though classroom observation was used in a limited manner, it helped to provide a perspective that could not be obtained by other methods.

4.5.4.7 Triangulation, Validation, and Credibility

In general, triangulation, crystallisation, peer validation, "interim" analysis and "interative research" guided data collection and analysis in this project (see 4.3.5). Peer validation, "a worthwhile activity in itself" (Hopkins 1993: 157), was emphasized (see also McNiff 1988:133). Three of the research participants were among the audience who listened to a paper based on the Main Phase research (Daoud 1997c).

Similarly, three foreign experts who contributed to the ESPC development attended presentations (based on this study) I gave at IATEFL or TESOL conferences (see Daoud 1997b, 1998b, c and d). This is in addition to other papers given at CELTE research Students' conferences (Daoud 1998e and 1999). Feedback from colleagues, experts, tutors, and research students enriched this study and contributed to its worth.

4.5.5 The Ethical Code

As recommended in the literature (section 4.3.4), an ethical code guided the study. This was agreed in a meeting before teachers engaged in AR, shortly before the medical course started (late December). In the announcement memo, I indicated the aim of the meeting and invited attendance of all the Centre staff.

The two-hour meeting had developmental and problem-solving aims. Problems that had emerged in the first few weeks of project implementation were discussed, mainly the changes in time commitments to CAWRP meetings and a suggested change in the original timeline. It was Christmas time, and only ten teachers were able to attend.* Eight of them carried out AR later. Copies of the memo arising from the meeting (Appendix 4.11) reached all the Centre staff, and critique and comment were invited. The main points agreed upon were:

a) Involvement, Focus, and Scope:

i) All interested teachers can do action research, individually or in pairs.

ii) Topics relate to problematic areas.

iii) Topics need to be narrow and focused in view of the time constraint.

b) Access and Confidentiality:

i) The researcher has access to participants' classrooms and research records.

ii) For confidentiality purposes, and in view of the fact that the majority of the Centre teachers are women, the female gender should be used in Daoud's PhD thesis when references to the teachers are made. [This was modified in the follow-up stage, and none of the teachers objected to the idea of using

pseudonyms instead.]

c) Other Issues

i) The teachers stressed their belief in the ethics of caring and sharing and in the principle that the research participants are owners of the CAWRP.

ii) The teachers were informed that the Director had promised two hours a week of extra pay as an incentive for carrying out research. But all agreed thatthey were not after material gain.

iii) Meetings between collaborating teachers are to be arranged by them personally in a way convenient to their work schedule.

iv) Communication is best done face-to-face. Other means were suggested: telephone, memos, noticeboard, and pigeon holes because of the constraints of time and space.

v) Progress and final research reports will be given in staff meetings.

vi) Deadline for final research reports is mid-February in view of the fact that teachers of three-month courses will be busy afterwards preparing for end-of-course tests and exams.

vii) Teachers desiring supervision need to ask for it.

4.5.6 Field Problems and Their Management

I have classified problems that emerged in the course of implementation into two main categories: practical and ideological. Practical problems are mainly methodology-related, while ideological ones are deeply rooted in the culture or cultures to which the research participants belong and in their personal beliefs and values (see Winter 1996). In most cases, however, this categorisation is not mutually exclusive. Practical problems might have roots in ideological ones and vice versa.

4.5.6.1 Practical Problems

Practical problems appeared at different stages but those encountered in the first few weeks were the most challenging. They needed immediate attention because of their

bearing on achieving project aims. These were:

a) decrease in the number of participants;
b) inadequate preparation for activities (e.g., reading the literature); and
c) decreased motivation to participate.

The first problem resulted mainly from staff loss and drop out (see 4.5.2). Problems b and c resulted from overload, a consequence of staff loss and the running of two projects at the same time. This affected baseline motivation and commitment.

Project principles and strategies helped dealing with the above problems. Firstly, after consulting the Director, we decided to reduce the number of required readings for the first DC from five papers to the two mostly read and found relevant by the teachers. Secondly, I used different strategies to motivate and involve the teachers:

- invited all of them to participate in the activities;
- used verbal encouragement;
- prepared a "CAWRP File" for each teacher, including those who dropped out or did not sign up (after getting their verbal consent on the idea) in order for them to receive all the project announcements, materials, reports, etc. and make use of them;
- encouraged colleagues (verbally and in writing) to send abstracts to the Third Maghreb ESP Conference in Tunis (27 February-1 march 1997) and indicated funding venues and other potential benefits (see Appendix 4.12);
- provided colleagues who asked for model conference papers with copies of published or unpublished papers written by Centre teachers, saying: "You can do it, too", a thing that motivated both the paper writers and users; and
- reminded colleagues, through a memo, that "Participation in the CAWRP activities, including classroom research, is "optional", pointing out that "If the motivation does not come from within, it will be futile" (see Appendix 4.13).

Thirdly, I used the same memo (Appendix 4.13) to tackle the expected problem of

sensitivity to negative peer feedback and to encourage genuine voices. I reminded all the staff of one main project principle (responsible freedom; see 4.3.1) and urged their appreciation of it and their understanding of the aims of the CAWRP:

> Principle #2: Feedback on activities is developmental and NOT judgmental. This means that negative comments on any activity or part of an activity should not in any circumstances be used to offend colleagues. Everyone of us has the right to express his/her own opinion freely, and the role of the others is to respect and empathise with that view (see Edge's *Cooperative Development*, of which I gave you an extract two weeks ago) ... (Clarification Sheet #2: 21 December 1996).

These strategies proved to be successful. The number of participants rose to an average of 15-16 in each meeting, and 20 out of a total of 23 teachers (including six who did not sign up in the baseline) participated in the Orientation Stage activities at different rates and intensities, 14 actively. Nine of the 14 proceeded to Stage Two and carried out AR. One unexpected outcome was that four of the five male teachers, the most overloaded, carried out AR. Another unexpected outcome was that five of the nine researchers were experienced teachers, contrary to my expectations (see 1.6.1).

4.5.6.2 Ideological Problems

Ideological problems were more difficult to deal with. The first emerged when both the Centre Director and her Evaluation Coordinator, who were leading the Material Evaluation Project, expressed concern regarding my approach to the teachers, describing it as "pushy" and "forceful". The Director advised me to "distance" myself "from the Centre" and "give the teachers psychological space". She reported teacher complaints and asked me to "establish the field" (Office Meeting: 7 December). The aims of my research were made explicit in the Baseline Phase (see 2.4.2.5), and it was on this basis the majority signed up for it. It just did not occur to me that some might need to be reminded of them again. At the same time, I was aware of the challenges of action research (see 3.5.6.2). I responded positively to the Director's advice, guided by my second reading of some chapters in Holliday (1994) and Lomax (1989b and 1990b). Busher's paper, "Conflicts and tensions in being a change agent"

(1990), gave me insight into a potential "solution" to these early ideological problems:

> I wanted the teachers to own the ... project and so take responsibility for its success or failure. To use Havelock's (1973) terms, I saw myself as a facilitator, not a solution giver; somebody who helped others to change rather than tell them what changes to make (Busher 1990: 23).

I adapted Busher's approach in writing Clarification Sheet # 1 in which I spelt out in great details the aims of the project (see Appendix 4.14). Referring to the findings of the baseline study, I wrote:

> Now suppose the research would show that your perception of our ability to stand on our feet were valid, I should provide proofs: WHY we have been able to do that. In other words, the reasons behind our success should be brought out to light. They are valuable to us ... But we should NOT keep this important discovery about ourselves to ourselves; we should report it so that other teachers and administrators ... can learn from us. T

Feeling that some were fearful of "evaluation", I also clarified my role:

> In this research process, I am acting as a participant. This means I am learning from you and with you. I do all the tasks required of you in this research to have a real feel of the problems you are facing (though I am aware of most of them already). ... we are all equals in our pursuit of improvement and knowledge (Clarification Sheet # 1: 9 December 1996).

This clarification sheet was influential in lowering staff's affective filter and marshalling their support and commitment to the project. This was quite clear in the rate of voluntary attendance, reading, and openness in expressing beliefs and feelings. Other behaviours and procedures I used were in line with the Director's advice and also in response to my early research findings. I

- distanced myself from the Centre but maintained contact with colleagues by telephone and writing;
- agreed with the Director to have a weekly meeting to discuss and manage problems;
- decided to give the participants full responsibility for evaluating the project and their

learning from it on an ongoing basis through feedback and discussion;

- decided to involve the teachers in the management of meetings by allocating the responsibility of leading the activities to the teachers whom I felt had a disposition to lead others without excluding myself from the responsibility of overall management in order to get the task done;
- made myself an object as well as instrument of research by including questions in the feedback questionnaires intended to investigate participants' response/reaction to my facilitation style and project methodology in general; and
- obtained the Director's approval of a regular two-way feedback strategy (Teachers to researcher *and* researcher to the teachers and Director).

This AR approach to managing problems is embedded in Holliday's *Appropriate Methodology and Social Context* (1994) and other project principles and strategies (see 4.3 and 4.4). It eased the problems, but did not eradicate them completely. The teachers who participated in the first discussion circle responded in diverse ways to the question on management, as evident in their open-ended comments:

- The discussion leader role was not clear in application (Jihad, Salma, Hind).
- Mrs Sada talked more than she should (Salma).
- Not everybody was given the chance to give his/her opinion (Mustafa).
- We overlooked many points ... just because we were restricted with time (Ola, Mustafa, Shehab).
- Efficient and straightforward (Shehab, Noor).
- Distribution of roles and participation of tutors made it very interesting. (Sonia)

Such feedback comments mirror human nature. We tend to view the world from our own "windows". Some focused on problems and others on potentials. Both views are necessary to create the dialectic and try to balance matters. Balancing requires interaction between the two opposing sides. Two related complaints emerged: dominance of the discussion space by the researcher and lack of equity in time distribution. Transcribing the recording of DC1 for analysis, I became aware of the fact that I had indeed taken almost 40% of the space. The reason became clear as I

read the transcripts and reflected on the event. DC1 was the first activity, and I was anxious to orient the teachers on the aims of the project as a whole. Also, the articles discussed were the basic ones, theoretically and in practice (process and product; team writing), and was concerned to intervene throughout the discussion to point out potential ideas the teachers were not aware of. Because it was the first activity and also examination time, only five teachers read the articles. My intervention was desirable to achieve the aims of the activity. The task being done, I decided to retreat to the back bench and allow the teachers to take the centre stage. Chapter Five presents a process description of our learning and teacher response. It also shows how I moved from a rather directive style of facilitation to one in which the steering wheel was put almost entirely in the hands of the participants. To a large extent, my role was determined by circumstances (here, teachers' lack of reading) rather than by plans or theory.

In a following meeting with the Director, I asked her whether she had received any more complaints about my role. She said:

> No, not this time, and I thought the circular that you sent them about your willingness to help them in their research and encouraging them to send abstracts to the conference in Tunisia ... might help in improving the interpersonal relationship between you and them (22 December 1996).

This feedback gave me confidence in the principles and strategies that guided project implementation. Problems in collaborative fieldwork, as in any other human endeavour, are basic aspects of the learning process (McNiff 1988). This was a view of the world that the Director and I did not seem to share, as can be seen in the following extract from the same meeting:

> **Director:** I have already explained to you the importance of gaining access to the teachers ... not just in the physical sense but also in the psychological aspects. ... This is part of the researcher's role.
> **Sada:** What is your advice to me?
> **Director:** I wish that meeting [on 7 Dec.] was recorded; it would have been very good for your research. You remember, [Hind], who was your coordinator in your absence, and myself as an internal supervisor, both of us, I think, agreed that there were some restlessness on the teachers' side with respect to attendance of workshops

and participation. And I think advice was given as to how one can find ways of easing things. One of the suggestions was that you should be less visible at the Centre, that over-visibility can sometime be counter-productive. And I think now you are less visible. I see less of you, which might have helped. It is good to meet people, but it is not good to make them feel that you are always there.
Sada: I am grateful for drawing my attention to such things. This is what collaboration means.
Director: Yes, of course. It is the interest of the Centre that we are all after.
Sada: Of course, but I'd like you to remember that if I had committed any mistakes, they were not intentional. I am also a human being; I am learning in the process like everybody else.
Director: No, no; there is no such thing as "mistakes". As you said, you're learning as you go along. ... So you can't call this "mistakes".
Sada: They *are* mistakes. But what is important is learning from them. Sometimes we need someone to draw our attention to our mistakes.
Director: Of course. This is the role of the advisor.
Sada: Thank you; I am grateful.
Director: Not at all.

This long extract throws light on the centrality of interaction and dialogue for understanding the self and the other.

Design and methodology of this collaborative project created time and space for us (in spite of our busy schedule) to talk, listen, and learn from one another through language (Fairclough 1989, 1992). The power of talking and listening helped us to expand, grow, and become aware of our strengths and limitations. In her "Presidential Address" at the 1996 Sociological Society's annual meeting, Heyl (1997: 6) talked about the power of "Talking Across the Differences" and the "Unanticipated Consequences" in "Collaborative Fieldwork":

> To focus on the concept of *differences* is to acknowledge a hot topic these days, not in theory but in social and political life as well. For example, embedded in the discussions about diversity, race relations, and gender is the issue of how *do* we talk about differences and across differences, and how we acknowledge and live out the differences among us - in a respectful way.

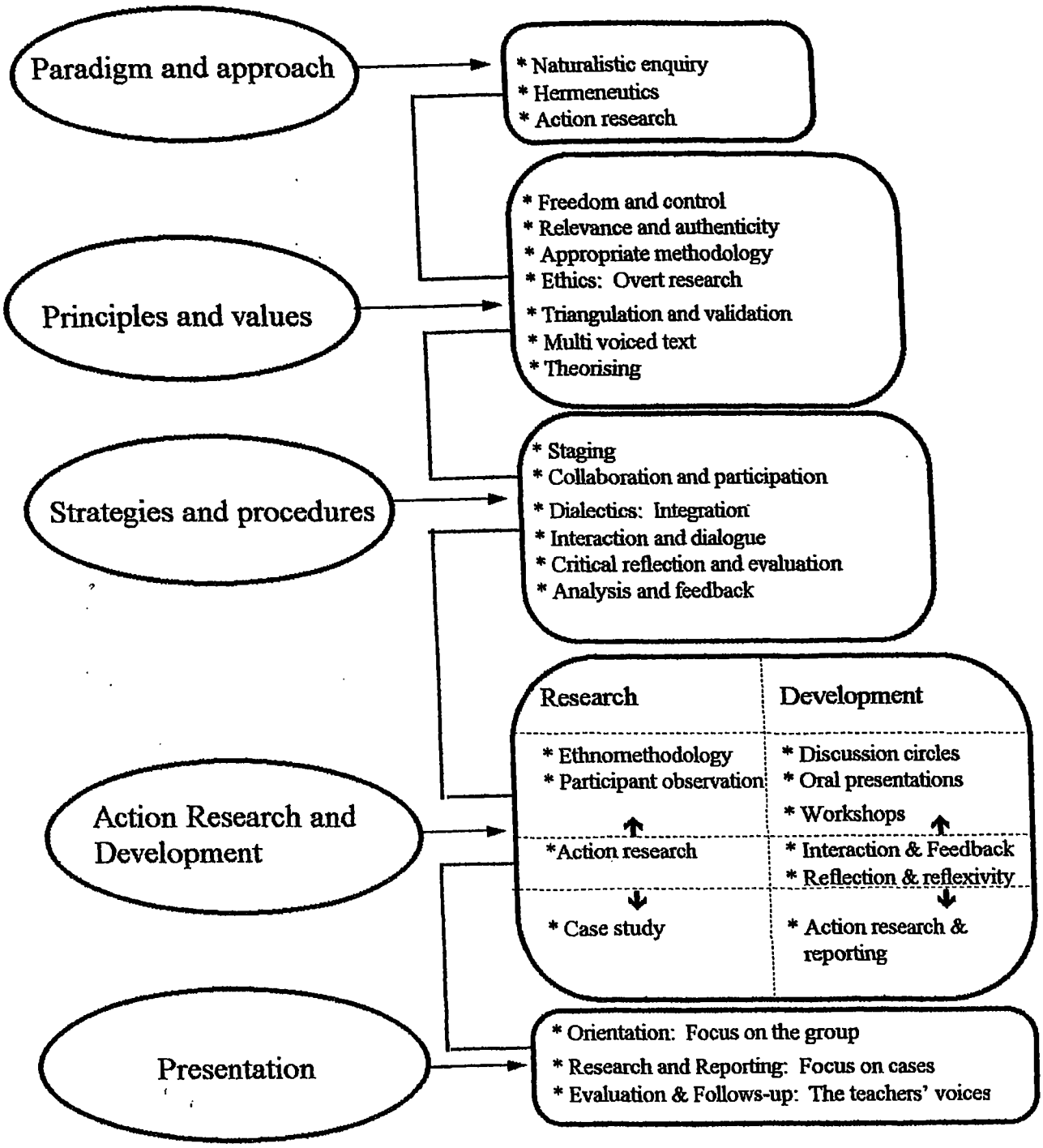
Heyl stresses the "power of listening" in helping people understand one another and accept the differences. Quoting Brenda Ueland, she adds: "Listening is a magnetic and

strange thing, a creative force. ... When we are listened to, it creates us, makes us unfold and expand". (*ibid.*: 4).

Intimacy and understanding of the self and the other are among the most precious lessons we have learnt from this collaborative AR project.

Figure 4.4 presents a visual representation of the study's design and methodology as presented and discussed in this chapter.

Figure 4.4 The CAWRP's Design and Methodology



4.6 Summary

The focus of this chapter is on design and methodology. It begins with a justification of the use of naturalistic enquiry and ethnographic action research. A presentation and discussion of the guiding principles of the study follows. These principles relate to issues in current project methodologies in the area of TD and classroom innovation. They include: freedom and control, relevance and authenticity, appropriate methodology, ethical issues, triangulation and validation, writing and presentation, and theorising. This is followed by a description of the strategies and procedures I have used: staging, collaboration and participation, dialectics, interaction and dialogue, reflection and reflexivity, and finally, analysis and feedback. The last section deals with action in relation to research and development and details how the approach, principles, and strategies have worked in practice.

The next three chapters describe the process of implementation, answering the research questions. Chapter Five focuses on the Orientation Stage; Six on the research and Reporting, and Seven on Evaluation and Follow-up.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Orientation Stage

5.1 Introduction

This chapter attempts to answer the first research question, namely, "How do the teacher development (TD) orientation activities contribute to the participants' development?". The chapter provides a description and interpretation of four major aspects of TD that relate to the aims of the Orientation Stage (see 1.6.2; 1.7; 4.5.3.1):

- Awareness of theory and practice
- Awareness of classroom innovations
- Formative reflection and critical evaluation
- Summative reflection and critical evaluation

Process and product descriptions are provided. The former is concerned with the proceedings of teacher learning and depends on (a) transcripts of recorded meetings in which the teachers discussed selected published papers or articles in the area of academic writing and (b)) field or diary notes taken during or following those events. Product description, on the other hand, focuses on the participants' critical reflection on and evaluation of their learning. It relies mainly on feedback questionnaires (see 4.3.5; 4.5.3.1; 4.5.4; 4.5.5). Table 5.1 provides quantitative evidence of the participants' rate of attendance and response to the required readings and indicates the time given to each activity. Table 5.2 points out who the early readers were and their readings (see Appendix 2.9 for the suggested reading list). These teachers were active in the early activities and had great influence on group learning. All but one (Hind) carried out action research and reported on it in the second stage. Two had 25 years of experience each (Jihad and Noor), and the other three were novices (Ola, Sadik, and Hind) with teaching experience ranging between one to four years.

Table 5.1 Rate of Response to the Orientation Stage Activities

Activity	Date	Time	No. of Participants	No. of Readers	Presenters or Leaders	Focus
DC 1	28 Nov.	2 hrs.	16	5	Jihad and Hind	Academic Writing: Process and Product
DC 2	16 Jan.	35 mins.	15	11	Hind	Plagiarism
COP 1	12 Dec.	50 mins.	16	11	Sadik & Ola	Peer Reviews
COP 2	12 Dec.	50 mins.	16	11	Salma & Reem	Self-monitoring
IOP 1	19 Dec.	50 mins.	14	5	Nidal	Hedges in Medical Articles
IOP 2	16 Jan.	35 mins.	15	11	Paul	Plagiarism
ARW	9 Jan.	1.30 hrs.	16	-	Noor, Rola, Jihad, Shehab, Sada	Action Research: Theory and Practice

Table 5.2 Early Readers and Their Readings

Reader	Academic Writing	Action Research
Noor	• Bloor and St John (1988) • White (1988) • Allwright (1988) • Doushaq (1986) • Silva (1990)	• Hopkins (1993) 'Developing a focus' • McNiff (1988) *Action research: principles and practice*
Jihad	• Bloor and St John • White	• McNiff (1988)
Hind	• Bloor and St John • White	• None
Sadik	• Bloor and St John • Hedge (1994) • Silva	NA
Ola	• Bloor and St John • Silva (1990) • Raimes (1993)	NA

As can be seen in Table 5.1, the TD activities are discussion circles (DCs); oral presentations (OPs), both collaborative (COPs) and individual (IOPs), and an action research workshop (ARW). Sadik and Ola (Table 5.2) did not sign up to lead the ARW, thus early reading on AR was not applicable (NA) in their case.

The main aims of these activities were to raise awareness about necessary concepts and practices in academic writing and AR and stimulate teacher reflection on and critical evaluation of the new ideas. The goal of this stage was motivating teacher-initiated action research (TAR) and classroom innovation (see 4.5.3.1).

5.2 Awareness of Theory and Practice

As mentioned before (see 2.5.2), the teachers needed to become aware of some basic theoretical and practical approaches to (a) teaching academic writing and (b) carrying out AR. The following sections describe and comment on how and to what extent this was achieved.

5.2.1 Academic Writing

The teachers needed to become aware of (a) process and product concepts and (b) teacher role in teaching project writing (see 2.5.2.1 and 2.5.2.2). The necessary concepts and ideas were embedded in seven papers they were encouraged to read in preparation for the DCs and OPs. The topics were: process and product, hedges, plagiarism, and feedback. These emerged as priorities in both the MA study and its follow-up, the baseline (see 1.5 and 2.5.2).

5.2.1.1 Process and Product

Teachers' awareness of process and product and the relationship of one to the other in teaching/learning project writing came about through group discussion of three papers: White (1988); Bloor and St John (1988); and Salager-Meyer (1994). The following extract from DC1 transcripts shows how the early readers (Table 5.2) are trying to articulate the meanings of concepts and ideas they encountered in their initial individual

reading:

> **Jihad:** ... [refers the teachers to a diagram in White's paper] As you can see ... "schemata" or 'long-term memory' is shown to play a big role in the act of writing. The other factors are "task environment" and "the writing process".
> **Sada:** Could you please give us an example of how schemata relates to writing.
> **Jihad**: A good example is a student confronted by an exam question which he believes, on first sight, that he knows nothing about. Then his schemata works. He remembers what he has revised or studied. This is ... schemata -- things stored in the mind. ...
> **Sadik**: I think schemata is not only the information taken from books, but also the mechanism, the technique that the writer learns during his life and uses when he wants to produce a piece of writing. Because if we say it is only information, ... what is meant by "task environment"? What is the difference between "task environment" and "schemata"? "Task environment" means the general experience or knowledge gained through one's life.
> **Ola**: General experience?
> **Sadik** : General experience is "task environment" but not "schemata". "Schemata" is the information ... the techniques used to deal with everything ...

Jihad mentioned at the start that he had learnt about "schemata" in the trainer-training course at Leeds University (see 1.4.6.4). His knowledge of "schemata" has been enhanced by the paper, as evident in the extract (above). Now he is acting as a resource to the group. Sadik, on the other hand, seems to be unclear about this concept. He is trying to verbalise his understanding. His vague formulation stimulated Ola's question, which, in turn, urged Sadik to repeat. He is encouraged by his colleagues' active listening as they try to comprehend his meaning (Edge 1992). My role in this specific example was as a catalyst of learning. I intentionally asked Jihad to give an example, feeling that the participants needed one.

The next stage in the discussion provides further evidence of how interaction aids teacher learning:

> **Hind:** Is there a way to improve students' schemata? In other words, what if our students don't, for example, have the schemata for a topic they are required to write on?
> **Jihad:** The author mentions reading ... for improving schemata. ...
> **Noor**: I think the author emphasises the idea that reading leads to writing and writing leads to reading. ... Sometimes when you reread what you have written, you add new ideas ... from your own schemata ...

The teachers here related theory to practice and practice to theory as they started to discuss the reading-writing relationship. Their discussion of "process" and "product" illuminated their developing awareness of the relevance of these concepts to their teaching:

> **Noor:** White emphasises that it is the process that we should care more about. ... The product is important, you see, but more important is how you come to that outcome.
> **Jihad**: Through the process.
> **Noor**: Yeh, through the process.
> **Sadik**: ... I agree ... The author of the paper uses the words "read", "write", "rewrite" ... and I just want to say that how to improve schemata is not only by reading but also by discussing ...
> **Ola**: I think this is true because one who has to speak or write must have a sense of the audience. As for the process and product, ... it is not a matter of which is more important ... I think the two are integrated, and it is a matter of stages. You start with process, and you end with product.
> **Sadik**: That's right.

This interaction suggests that the teachers who have read the theoretical paper and discussed what they read have become aware of different concepts relevant to teaching/learning writing (schemata, process, product, audience). Most of these concepts appeared to be vague even in the minds of experienced colleagues in the Baseline Phase, as Box 5.1 shows.

Box 5.1 Examples of teachers' baseline awareness of theory

Sada: How do you view the relationship between reading and writing?
Jihad: Well, in order to be a good writer, you should be a good reader. When you read and copy, copying is good. Beginning writers imitate other writers and then become writers themselves.

Sada: In your approach to teaching the APP, how much attention do you give to the process and to the product?
Shehab: You know the process does not take long. You say to your students 'These are the steps and here's a model; try to learn from this', and let them write their own product ... The instruction period should be short. ...

Teachers' awareness of the distinction between process and product was further enhanced by introducing them to the concept of "hedges". Nidal, a specialist in this area, presented Salager-Meyer's paper (1994) to the group. The main aims of his presentation were to (a) raise awareness that process and product are important in academic writing, and (b) draw attention to possible ways for teaching hedges.

Nidal explained how hedges function in different sections of medical research articles, focusing mainly on the "introduction":

> ... the introduction in research papers ... and case reports make use of shields very highly. ... This is ... because in the introduction writers ... make claims. Their claims have not been proven ... yet, and therefore, in order to tone down their statements, they use a lot of hedging techniques. ... Examples ... are on p. 158 [he reads a few].

He gave more time to the pedagogical implications. Here, he related "hedges" to his PhD work and seemed particularly involved at this stage:

> The pedagogical implications ... are very important. ... I included hedges in my research under mitigating devices. Mitigating devices are ... often used for social considerations, for personal relationships, for academic research, for avoiding general claims and big assumptions. Their importance is unique when we compare the straight and direct style of writing in Arabic of our students, and perhaps of ourselves, with that followed in English.

The distinction he drew between Arabic and English styles was both interesting and useful. The teachers had never heard of these concepts, as they told Nidal. Nine (out of 14) confessed to not reading the article in preparation for the IOP because of its level of difficulty and/or their lack of time. For this reason, Nidal encouraged questions while presenting. The teachers asked about differences between Arabic and English in the use of hedges. Nidal responded:

> Our style is more direct and more definitive. If we ... know something, we tend to say "that is a fact". This is the situation "absolutely", "honestly", "by God", etc. These expressions are very much used in our communication. In English, it is the other way round: "perhaps", "maybe", "let's see", etc. These are mitigating devices.

Doha asked for more information about the "emotional aspect" of "mitigating devices". Nidal said:

> ... if you ask somebody "Are you all right?" and the person is a friend of yours, and he cares for your emotions, and he/she says: "Yes, quite. Thanks", this "yes" was studied by researchers as a mitigating device. A mitigating device is a reflection of the mental process, and the mental process here is only the speaker's or writer's intention. So in such a situation, ... the intention in the mind of that speaker was to enable the requester to avoid a possible ... suffering ... 'To mitigate' is 'to make less'.

In our planning meeting, Nidal and I agreed on showing the teachers a number of ex-medical students' APPs and asking them to locate examples of hedging devices. The teachers' response to this task was described in a fieldnote:

> The seminar room was buzzing with activity as the teachers started their search for hedging devices in students' APPs. Nidal asked us to work in pairs and speak "One at a time, not all together, please" whenever we found an example.

The teachers found only a few hedging devices in the 12 projects they checked, so Nidal advised that

> Hedges in such projects should be more frequent, especially because they are simulations. ... Also, students should be taught how to be polite in using others' words ...

He drew our attention to some exercises on p. 165 in the article. He mentioned that one exercise suggested that students work in groups to underline all the hedges they find in an article.

5.2.1.2 Teacher Role in Teaching Project Writing

In the Baseline Phase, the majority of teachers were unclear and/or dissatisfied with the role required of them in APP teaching (see 2.5.2.1 and 2.5.2.2). Box 5.2 presents three responses to the question "How would you describe your role as an APP teacher?".

Box 5.2 Baseline lack of clarity about teacher role in project writing

Rola: ... I haven't done a research myself. Things are not clear to me. That's why I feel guilty ... I ask them to follow a model [previous APP]. ... They do it as if they were following a prescription without much thinking, which is for my relief.

Reem: Here ... the most important thing is the outline not ... grammar. They tell us 'don't correct grammatical mistakes'. We have to see how students write. ...
Sada: What do you feel?
Reem: I don't like it. ... I need ... practice. That's why I rate myself as average teacher.

Hind: I don't know, from the impression I have in my class, I can't say that I am a facilitator. I want to see myself as a guide, but ... my students ... told me lots of times that I am making it very hard for them. ...

Reading and follow-up discussion of Bloor and St John's and White's papers on process and product in academic writing helped to enlighten the teachers about their role in at least two areas that seemed to be problematic: supervising and modelling (see 2.5.2.2). Regarding supervising project writing, some teachers became more aware of their role, and others were relieved to know that their intervention to instruct the learners directly was pedagogically acceptable, as Bloor and St John suggest:

> **Jihad:** ... Could you please turn to p. 89 (reads): 'The responsibility of all the activities lies with the student'. We are applying the same method here ... Our students are responsible for everything, the process and product.

Jihad, and perhaps others, did not seem to have gone further in reading the paper and could have stopped where the idea strikingly coincided with what was required of the Centre teachers. So I came in, supported by Noor, who appeared to have read in more depth:

> **Sada:** But Bloor and St John write about student responsibilities **and** teacher responsibilities. ...
> **Noor:** That's right. Look at the same page, paragraph 3 (reads) 'Teacher's responsibility lies in providing input and instruction related to this process'.

Noor suggested reading the section on "The lecturer's role" out loud. In the follow-up discussion, she and other experienced colleagues focused mainly on the item that reads: "a teacher may need to teach quite explicitly the conventions of project writing ...".

As for modelling, the majority seemed to be using ex-students' APPs as models instead of authentic papers. This was pointed out and criticised by medical students in the MA study (see 1.5). Discussion of the "process and product" papers helped to draw teachers' attention to what was lacking:

> **Noor:** Another important thing mentioned in Bloor and St John's paper is providing models and analysing them.
> **Jihad:** Yes. ... we don't provide our students with models. We should have this. For example, civil engineering students depend on themselves in the paper, but here, I think it should be our responsibility to prepare copies ...

One important aspect of modelling missed in Bloor and St John's list of teacher roles is "the teacher-as-researcher" (Stenhouse 1975). As it was implied in White's paper, I took the opportunity to raise awareness about it and assess participants' response:

> **Sada:** Please read the paragraph that begins "What this catalogue ..., page 14 in White's paper and try to make sense of its message for teachers ...

Hind was the first to respond:

> **Hind:** In this paragraph, the writer emphasizes the point that teachers write themselves, so students can see how it is done. They observe the process rather than the product.
> **Sada:** Right. The writer here focuses on the teacher, suggesting that she/he model the process of writing on the board while students are observing. But what about teacher's going through the whole process students are required to go through? ... In our case, this means the students carry out research and write it up and we do the same thing. ... We should practise what we preach ...

As I listened and transcribed the tape that night, I realized that my "lecture" was long, contrary to my intentions. Resistance and acceptance of my suggestion clashed in the seminar room, and discussion intensified. It was interesting to observe (and listen to) colleagues' spontaneous responses and reactions. This helped me make guesses as to who would probably undertake AR and who might resist. Shehab, Noor, Sadik, and Ola were enthusiastic supporters, and Hind was an obvious opponent (see 2.5.2.2).

The majority, however, preferred to remain silent and listen to the arguments. This heated debate over teacher-initiated action research (TAR) was apparently reported to the Director the same day. On the noticeboard allocated for "URGENT" messages in the staffroom, I read an administrative decision, informing "all the ESPC tutors" that AR "in the CAWRP" was "optional". It was dated 28 November, the same day DC1 took place.

5.2.2 Action Research

Raising awareness about AR was one main aim of the orientation stage activities, and the objective was to motivate the teachers to carry out action research in as informed a manner as possible. The second aim was to help colleagues become "educated" "critical friends" or "community" in evaluating TAR reports (see 3.5.3). Orienting teachers about AR was done through individual reading and involving experienced and influential members of staff in leading a workshop on AR.

However, four problems faced the AR workshop before it started, and all were managed relying on AR principles and strategies (see Chapter 4). First, two colleagues, who had signed up for the workshop in the Baseline Phase dropped out, and colleagues suggested my taking their role (see 4.5.4.5). Secondly, because the time originally negotiated and agreed for the workshop was arbitrarily reduced from three to two hours, we agreed in our planning meeting to focus on the basics in the workshop and to rely on supplementary materials and handouts to inform colleagues further. The third problem was expected; all the teachers who had opted to lead the workshop were Core and APP teachers, and almost all had administrative responsibilities. They, therefore, needed more time to prepare for their roles. As a result, the workshop was postponed twice to meet their needs. Finally, Hind, a key workshop leader, was taken ill suddenly, and Rola agreed to stand in for her at a short notice. Because Rola did not have sufficient time, I helped in locating literature for her to read and in preparing a handout (see Appendix 5.1).

As we shall see, the AR workshop itself was fraught with problems that were managed by the powerful strategies of AR, which relies on reflection-in-action and on-

action (see 3.4.2.4; 4.4.5). One contextual problem was frequent power cuts; that affected the recording. For this reason, the evidence presented in this section relies on participant observation notes and retrospective accounts recorded in my diary. The rest of this section attempts to articulate a process picture of how the workshop was run and the role of each of the five leaders (Noor, Rola, Jihad, Shehab, and Sada).

5.2.2.1 Aims and Usefulness

Noor's role was to inform colleagues about the "Aims and usefulness of AR". The workshop was supposed to start at 11.00 and end at 13.00 hours to allow for a meeting for the Material Evaluation Project (MEP). Noor was the first speaker. She seemed disappointed about colleagues' lack of enthusiasm, evident in their late arrival. I was the session manager and asked her to wait, while "the teachers present started to talk about the cultural concept of time" (diary). At 11.30 we numbered 16 and were ready to start. The Director was among us.

Noor surprised us by her first activity. After a brief introduction, she gave us the instructions:

> I'm going to give each pair of you a piece of blank paper. What I want you to do is to write on one side the main reason you think the teachers come late to workshop meetings. On the other side, write one suggestion to solve the problem. I'll call on the pairs in three minutes to give answers ...

This activity generated heated discussion. Many contextual problems teachers suffered from were mentioned: "overload", "exhaustion", "frequency and density of meetings", "lack of interest", "family", "transport problems", etc. However, the most interesting aspect of the activity was Noor's creative application of AR. It was a significant shift in her understanding of AR (see section 6.3.1.2 on her entry point). Whether this activity was meant to raise awareness of consequences of overloading teachers or just an AR activity in its own right was not clear. Whatever the intent, the activity served a dual purpose.

Noor's second activity was also interesting, creative, and educative:

> Now, we need to know more about action research: What action research is and its aims and usefulness. I'll give you these pieces of paper which contain, in a mixed way , and without any title, a definition of action research, some of its aims and usefulness in education, particularly for teachers [she wrote on the board three headings: 'Definition', 'Aims', and 'Usefulness']. Decide in your discussion of the information presented in your pieces of paper where it fits. In five minutes, I'll call on you to give your answers.
>
> She asked us to work in pairs, and gave each pair 3-4 pieces. In five minutes, she called for answers. The terms 'democratic participation' 'bottom-up process', 'change', 'professional development', 'critical evaluation', 'involvement', 'problem-solving', etc. came up and were recorded on the board. In some cases, participants could not decide where the information would best fit. This led to more discussion and involvement.

The Director came in at this stage, commented on Noor's contribution, and explained that AR was *not* viable in our context:

> ... She reminded Noor that she had 'missed the requirements of AR' and explained the term 'systems'. She mentioned 'open' and 'closed systems' and pointed out that 'in hierarchical systems, you can't have any action research because there are certain conditions that should exist in order for AR to be viable; for example staff seminars are a requirement now in all the University faculties, but staff can't come because they ... do several jobs to make ends meet. Unless pay conditions are improved, teachers cannot devote time to staff seminars, and in our case [the ESPC], every one gets paid for the two hours allocated to staff seminars whether he/she attends or not'.

The above extract indicated a change in the Director's previously stated positive stance towards TAR. It was not clear to me, then, what her intention might be, but upon analysing this extract and comparing and contrasting it with other extracts from Office dialogues and participant observation notes, it looked as if the Director was trying to discourage TAR, seeing some kind of threat in it. I had already told her that the teachers would be asked to decide whether to carry out AR or not in the AR workshop. She seemed to be hinting that they would be paid for the two hours allocated by the Ministry to staff development meetings whether they attended or not. As indicated in the literature (see 3.3.2), change is threatening, especially if it comes in the form of AR (see 3.5.6.2). My understanding of this fact helped me to be patient

and persistent. Noor seemed to have developed a similar conviction upon reading McNiff (1988):

> Noor, among others, listened attentively to the Director as she explained the inappropriateness of AR to the local context; her 20 minutes were exceeded, but I did not stop her ... I wanted her to accomplish her task. She distributed copies of Chapter 4 from McNiff's book: 'Why Teachers Should Engage in Action Research' and urged us to 'Read it carefully at home and think'. She concluded her part saying: 'Action research has affected the way I deal with problems at home' (Diary based on fieldnotes).

The next day, I called Noor, among others, to thank her for making the workshop a successful learning opportunity. "She expressed disappointment regarding what the Director had said about AR" (Diary). This, however, did not seem to have affected her enthusiasm for AR, unlike the case of Salma and Doha, who apologised for being unable to carry out AR immediately following the workshop, perhaps influenced by the Director's remarks about AR and the local context.

5.2.2.2 Collaboration and Self-Evaluation

Rola's part focused on "Teacher Collaboration and Self-evaluation" (originally, Hind's selected area of interest). She arrived 15 minutes after the workshop had started. The day before, I gave her a chapter taken from Doff (1988), entitled "Self-evaluation", to read and prepare her part. In it, there is an activity called "Good and Bad Teaching". Rola adapted the activity creatively. She asked us to work in groups of five to agree on:

> - definition of 'good teaching',
> - five characteristics of 'good teaching',
> - five characteristics of 'bad teaching', and
> - our definition of 'good teacher'. (fieldnote)

She wrote the headings on the board and elicited answers. I noted in my diary that night that Rola "looked self-confident". "Eyes focused on her as she asked questions to get us talking". She pointed out the importance of peer and self-evaluation for TD

with reference to her activity and the handout I had prepared for her. Finally, she gave us a definition of "good teaching" she had adapted from Doff's chapter: "Good teaching is enabling students to learn; it involves supervising, guiding, and evaluating" (Fieldnote).

Rola, a Coordinator, "dashed out the minute she finished her task. She had already warned me that she would leave early ..." (diary).

5.2.2.3 Techniques and Procedures

Jihad's part focused on "Techniques and Procedures" in AR. He had prepared several extracts (tables, diagrams, etc.) from McNiff's book. He asked us to work in groups and list all the techniques and procedures we could think of for collecting classroom data. He wanted us to reflect on their advantages and disadvantages in our context. In about five minutes, he tried to elicit answers and record them on the board. I noted in my diary that

> Salma dominated Jihad's part ... One experienced teacher mentioned "references" as research techniques. Jihad did not correct her. ... The teachers wanted to raise questions, but Jihad did not have time to answer. He ... advised us to read McNiff's book. ...

5.2.2.4 Constraints on Action Research

Shehab's part focused on "Constraints on Action Research and Ways for Dealing with Them". Like his colleagues, he elicited answers from participants. He wrote on the board headings for four main categories of constraints ("material", "cultural", "course", "personal") and asked us to name constraints for each category and suggest ways for dealing with them. "The Director came back while Shehab was still leading". She mentioned "Means Analysis" as "the best method to deal with constraints but did not define the term or give examples" (Diary/fieldnotes).

Shehab's distributed an information sheet. One section listed the characteristics of action researchers, taken from McNiff (1988): "courageous", "committed",

"collaborative", "reflective", "critical", "autonomous", etc. Another section focused on "Dealing with Constraints". It described a procedure taken from Scrivener (1994). The title was "Procedure 1: Working with constraints":

1. Define the problem you are facing.
2. Analyse the problem (cause and effect).
3. Brainstorm for a solution.
4. Reflect on the options.
5. Act, plan, observe, etc.
   (Source: Shehab's handout).

Shehab attached a practical example that illustrated the implementation of these steps, taken from the same source. At the end of his part, he pointed out his own recommendations for dealing with constraints on TAR:

- Do not yield to constraints!
- If you are not part of the problem, you are part of the solution.
- If there is a will, there is a way (Shehab's handout).

5.2.2.5 Focusing Your Action Research Topic

My part, "Focusing Your Action Research Topic", was meant to round up the workshop and provide practice in narrowing down AR topics (see Appendix 5.2). However, when Shehab finished, it was 13.00 hours, the time the MEP meeting was scheduled to take place. The Director came to the front and announced the end of the AR workshop. I reminded her that 30 minutes had been lost waiting for the teachers to arrive and urged her to give me 15 minutes to present my part. She gave me "one minute", so I tried to make use of it:

> I promised colleagues to present my part after the MEP meeting. ... Many complained, saying they were exhausted. ... It is Ramadan, and many are fasting. ... I distributed my handouts, the supplementary materials, and the feedback questionnaire. ... Five teachers (Jihad, Sadik, Ola, Reem, and Abeer) stayed behind for my part .... Jihad, the only experienced among them, appeared to be particularly sensitive to what had happened in and to the workshop.

My part was a practical lesson in AR. For the first time, perhaps, colleagues

came to realize that things were not going on as smoothly as they had anticipated.

5.3 Awareness of Classroom Innovations

In this section, I describe and comment on how team writing and two related innovatory feedback practices (peer reviews and self-monitoring) were introduced and on the participants' initial and subsequent receptivity to these proposed classroom innovations.

5.3.1 Team Writing

"Team writing" is my main MA study recommendation. It was based on my reading of Bloor and St John's paper, "Project Writing: The Marriage of Process and Product" (1988). In the following extracts from DC1 transcripts, I show how participants' awareness about "team writing" was raised through the discussion of White's and Bloor and St John's papers:

> **Sada:** Let's consider the idea of writing in the classroom raised by White. I noticed in some APP sessions I observed in the Baseline ... that students sometimes told stories to one another in Arabic while the teacher was discussing writing problems with individuals. If students are asked to write in the classroom ... and exchange their pieces for peer feedback, they can be observed for using English and will learn more from one another. They will also become more aware of the audience factor in academic writing .... What do you think?

In this extract, I warmed up for the innovation of team writing by raising the idea of peer feedback. Peer feedback is widely used at the ESPC in teaching course components. However, it was found to be lacking in APP pedagogy (Daoud 1995b) due to the time constraint (see 1.5). The reaction I received (to the above suggestion) was needed to raise the idea of "team writing". As can be seen in the following extract, teacher beliefs are influential in accepting/rejecting pedagogic innovations:

> **Sadik:** I tried it [peer feedback]. They [students] were not interested in each other's writing.

Sada: Then what about team writing in Bloor and St John's paper? In this case, two or more students write one APP. I think students in this case might be more interested reading for one another because they have stake in the reading ....
Sonia: Students don't give much weight to each other's criticism. They always wait for the final word ... from the teacher.
Noor: If the teacher hesitates in giving them his final word, they think he is weak: 'this teacher doesn't know.' (All participants laugh.)
Hind: What I've found ... more useful ... is to discuss one of the student's writing on the BB and try to rewrite it or give it better ideas or meaning. It was very useful and motivating for my students.
Sada: I think we should ... train our students to depend on themselves. They can't depend on us for ever.

It is clear in this dialogue that participants' responses are embedded in their beliefs, experiences, and cultural expectations. As a result of the baseline study, I was aware of who might resist team writing most. Sonia and Sadik (see the above extract) were prominent among them (see 6.4.1.3, for example). Teachers who opposed the innovation were mostly concerned about the eventual evaluation of APPs written collaboratively. They believed that one student in the team would do most if not all the work, a reason medical students whom I interviewed at the hospital did not accept, saying that students were not naive to the extent of allowing this to happen because "We are all busy and need every minute" (hospital interviews). One of their main reasons for accepting team writing was that the time burden would be shared by team members. Because of medical students' acceptance of the idea and the convincing reasons they presented for accepting it (see 2.5.1.3), I was keen on convincing my colleagues to give it a try and evaluate its worth objectively in the form of AR rather than relying on beliefs and assumptions. I used the literature to support my argument and alleviate their anxiety about evaluation of team-written APPs. To convince them, I raised the idea of progress presentations, which were also needed by students, as discovered in the baseline investigation (2.5.1.3):

Sada: In Bloor and St John's, oral presentations come at the end of the process, and this is what we do here at the Centre. Can we adapt this approach and ask students to give progress presentations at different stages in the process of writing? We can require them to tell us and the class at large about the problems that confront them in

> the process of their research and writing. ... Progress presentations are particularly important in team writing because they provide the teacher with evidence that ... students are equally contributing to their project. This is what some of you were concerned about when I raised the idea in the baseline study. ... What do you think?

The teachers reacted in different ways to the ideas of team writing and progress presentations. In the following extract, I show two responses by APP teachers:

> **Jihad:** I can't apply it because sometimes I have eight specializations in my class. My [Sci-Tec] students are not homogeneous, but in medical groups, it is OK.
> **Noor**: I do this actually. Every time students meet for their APP sessions I ask them where they are now, and students get advice from classmates and the teacher. But we don't call it oral presentation; we call it discussion.
> **Sada:** ... Sitting there in their seats and talking is different from facing the class. I have noticed that our students like challenging tasks, and they do better and are more creative when they speak from the platform. ...

Jihad believed that team writing was not viable in his class because of its composition of many specialisations, while Noor showed more flexibility because she had experienced something like progress presentations in her class. Such reactions/responses are reported in other studies (e.g., Zeuli 1994; see also 8.3.6 and 8.3.7 for a discussion of this point). Change, it has been shown, needs time and patience on the part of the innovator. My awareness of the threat of change to teachers, particularly older ones, helped me to be patient but persistent in my campaign for team writing. I was keen on seeing it tested in practice because medical students, the target of this innovation, welcomed the idea (see 2.5.1.3). The week the medical course started (late December), I reminded the teachers, in writing, of their Baseline Phase "ethical obligation" to try team writing in their classrooms. In a memo (see Appendix 5.3), I explained the principles on which "team writing" could be introduced into our classrooms (see 4.3.1):

> We should not in any way force students to team-write but try to encourage them to do so by raising their awareness of the importance of collaboration between people of the same profession. (memo: 21 December).

On the whole, the teachers responded positively to this memo. Shortly after the start of the second trimester (January 1997), eight Med course APP teachers (out

of 11) reported student high response to team writing in their classes (see 6.3.2.3; 6.4.2.3). Jihad, who was allocated a Med class, started an AR project on the management of this innovation. He also tried progress presentations to monitor students' collaborative work. Eventually, the innovation was implemented on a wide-scale in the medical course, as the teachers were encouraged by students' high response rate to the innovation, a thing that surprised them. Still, three experienced medical course teachers resisted the innovation, one explicitly and two implicitly. Experienced teachers' resistance to innovation is often interpreted by educators and researchers with reference to status and/or feeling of insecurity (see 3.3.1.4 and 3.3.2).

5.3.2 Peer Reviews

Sadik and Ola were allocated Mangelsdorf's "Peer reviews" (1992) to evaluate critically and present to the group. This research paper was purposely allocated to Sadik because of his explicit lack of belief in "rewriting" and "team writing" (see 2.5.2.2; 6.4.1.1; 6.4.1.3; 6.4.2.3). Peer reviews was also a needed classroom innovation, according to the MA study findings (Daoud 1995b).

Sadik and Ola's initial evaluation of the value of "peer reviews" was positive. They told me when I observed one of their planning meetings that they had agreed to pilot it in their Prof classes. In that meeting, they "went through 'Peer reviews' section by section ... and carried out content analysis" (fieldnote). Then they discussed the procedure of piloting the research and seemed to disagree over grouping students:

> Sadik and Ola argued strongly about grouping students in peer reviews: "strong-strong"; "weak-weak"; or "strong-weak". Ola thinks that students of the same level should be grouped together (like the article). Sadik believes the opposite (one student strong and the other weak). They finally agreed that they should define "strong" and "weak" and that their grouping of students should depend on their "complete understanding" of their students. (fieldnotes)

The decision they reached seemed to satisfy both of them temporarily, but the indications were that there was more discussion to come. Both agreed that it was

"necessary to unify the process of 'peer reviews' if they wanted to compare their findings" (fieldnote).

This planning meeting (like similar ones in this study) provided sufficient evidence to suggest that discussion and interaction between colleagues sharpen their critical reflection and evaluation abilities and consolidate their understanding of the literature they read individually. Moreover, in the case of Sadik and Ola, argument facilitated their acquisition of a core of terms relevant to the subject discussed (see Hedge 1993 and 3.3.1.3). Disagreement over certain points did not seem to affect their relationship or collaboration.

In the actual presentation, Sadik presented the theoretical part of "peer reviews". While reporting, he reflected on each value of this feedback technique and evaluated its relevance to the local context. As can be seen, his evaluative comments (presented in italics below) are both reflective and reflexive:

> **Sadik:** [smiling] Could you please look at p. 275 ... [reads]: 'the peer review has the potential to be a powerful learning tool'. Firstly, peer reviews 'provide students with an authentic audience ...'.
>
> *We've all the time been teaching our students to write and we correct. They write, and we correct. So we plant in their minds the ... teacher as the reader. We never give them the chance of becoming readers of their colleagues' writing or even their own writing.*
>
> Secondly, "[peer reviews] increase student motivation for writing".
>
> *When I was a student at the University, I felt disappointed because my teacher corrected all my mistakes. When my friends corrected for me, of course they missed a lot, but this encouraged me to write more. ...*
>
> Third, [peer reviews] "enable students to receive different views on their writing".
>
> *The teacher is one person . . . who imposes his ideas on students, whereas it is not the case when you have students correct for one another.*
>
> Fourth, "[peer reviews] help students to read critically their own writing and assist students in gaining confidence. ..."
>
> *This is what we need: ... confidence ... ask them, push them to actually speak to us in English.*

His (and Ola's) reflection level reached its peak when they reported and evaluated the findings of their pilot study. The way Sadik broke the secret pilot news reflected a sense of achievement:

> **Sadik** (smiling): Now, we did a pilot study of the same research in both our classes, and here we have papers of two students [Ola distributes the handouts]. The handouts show you two examples from two students. One is good at composition ... the second ... is not ... As you can see, the student who corrected was the good student. All the mistakes he corrected were spelling. ... Look at the bottom of the same paragraph. You can see the student-editor's comment: 'Content is good ... has some mistakes'. ... He means spelling mistakes.
>
> Now look at the second example [paper]. The student-editor made the same spelling mistakes he had corrected [for his classmate]. Notice now what happened: When I was correcting the paper, the student who made the spelling mistakes referred to his *own* spelling mistakes. **I *never* expected this** ... If you look at the second line 'admere him'. He wrote it 'e', and if you look at the paragraph above you can find 'hiem' and 'whien' written 'ie'. Well, he made the same mistakes but this time he corrected them himself. **For me, this was something good.**

Then Sadik made a comparison between the findings reported in Mangelsdorf's study and those of the pilot one:

> Now what happened? students in the article commented on content and organization, a bit on grammar and structure. In our case, it was exactly the opposite. Students concentrated on spelling and grammatical mistakes and a little on content and organization [he reads some examples].

I noted Sadik's "ability to interpret his students' meanings" and wondered whether I, or any other outsider/researcher, would be able "to understand what they meant in isolation from them or the teacher".

One important discovery was the clear shift that took place in Sadik's attitude to "rewriting" (cf. his belief in 2.5.2.2 and 6.4.1.1). He explicitly mentioned that "rewriting" had contributed to improving students' paragraphs:

> **Sadik:** Students were asked to rewrite their paragraphs after they had been corrected ... Students were eager to improve their paragraphs. Many changes were introduced in the process of rewriting.

This meant the strategy of allocating "peer reviews" to Sadik had achieved its aims in a natural manner, through empowerment with knowledge (theory) and living the idea in practice, understanding, and interpreting its value (see 3.3.2.3).

Sadik concluded his part of the pilot report saying: "That's it. For me, I didn't expect this; it was great". He gave the floor to Ola to report on her findings.

Ola reported findings in her class similar to Sadik's. Students made the same mistakes they corrected for their peers. This finding "surprised" Ola, too. Equally surprising to her was students' focusing on grammar and spelling. "That was very interesting," she said.

> ... It was really astonishing. As Sadik said, most of the mistakes corrected are grammar and spelling. Very few mistakes referred to content ...

Her students' response to "peer reviews" was also positive:

> After they finished the activity, my students told me that it was *very* interesting, and they wanted to do it every now and then. They said 'we learn how to correct our own mistakes, how to read, and how to be good writers'....

Ola ended the presentation by summarising the advantages and disadvantages of "peer reviews", as evidenced in the "pilot study", and pointed out her and Sadik's future action plan:

> The only problem with this activity is that it is time-consuming. ... We recommend this activity. We'll use it in our classes in the next trimester. ... It is very beneficial and students like it. But it might not be the same with every class. ...

It is clear that benefits were substantial in this collaborative oral presentation, both on the individual and group levels. This is not to mention the benefits that students will get from their teachers' get-together to discuss published articles, exchange views, ideas, and experiences. The benefit was greater for the teacher presenters, who needed to prepare the article well before facing the whole group who would critique the presentation for the purpose of learning/development. Sadik and

Ola's motivation to do achieve was evidently high, and they earned a "high score" from their critical peers (see 5.4.3).

5.3.3 Self-monitoring

Similarly, the article on "self monitoring" (Charles 1990) was allocated to two novice teachers, Salma and Reem, who also held planning meetings to discuss and evaluate the article before presenting it to the group. In the meeting I observed (their first), they seemed to have two different interpretations of the value of "self-monitoring". These seemed to be embedded in their personal beliefs and experiences:

> Salma summed up saying that 'self-monitoring is not applicable to the majority of Centre students, who are weak, because it is time-consuming'. Reem, however, thought that 'it is applicable if used in combination with other methods of feedback'. She mentioned that she had experienced something similar to 'self-monitoring' in a Humanities class 'last year', where the initiative came from one of her best students: 'I was not aware that this is called self-monitoring,' she said. 'It was very, very successful, and I really liked it'. (Diary based on fieldnotes)

In presenting the research article to the group, Salma delivered the theoretical part. She went through previous feedback practices, highlighting the advantages and disadvantages of each and eliminating one after the other, as Charles does in her article, then gave an accurate description of the self-monitoring technique:

> We come now to ... 'self-monitoring' ... Here the student does three things. First of all, he writes the draft and points out the things he believes are wrong, whether in relation to grammar, content, organization, etc. He writes these things, maybe numbers them, and writes comments below and gives it to the teacher. The teacher reads the text and student's comments, comments on student's comments, and then returns it ... to the student. So the student again reads these comments, improves his writing ... kind of successive cycles that could lead to several drafts.

In presenting the literature in this manner, Salma helped her colleagues, who might not have read the article in depth, understand the theoretical basis of "self-monitoring" and have snap shots of other feedback techniques that the new practice built on. Many of these were unfamiliar to us, too (Daoud 1995b).

During the presentation, I wanted to discover whether Salma and Reem had influenced each other's original response/reaction to "self-monitoring". What became apparent, initially, was that they had agreed to disagree and seemed to have accepted the differences in opinion between them as natural. This was evident in what they said and how they behaved while presenting the article:

> **Salma:** They say here that this method saves time. I don't think it saves time ... I believe that facing students or talking to them is more helpful. Teachers need to go over students' corrections again, you see! ... I teach intermediate students. I don't think this technique is applicable to them because they are not able to write ... with some degree of correctness. (recording)

Salma appeared to have persisted in her view; she does not see much value in the self-monitoring technique for her students. However, she mentioned that "Reem has a different perspective" and invited her colleague to take the floor and express her opinion:

> **Reem:** I prefer this because ... I had experienced something like self-monitoring with my students and found it *very, very* important because, as said here [in the article], ... the red colour, the red pen ... fears students ... 'Red! ... Full of red? Oh, my God, what is this? It is a bad paper!' For this reason, I don't use red for correction; I use green. ... (recording)

Evidently, Reem was enthusiastic about the idea. To convince colleagues, she referred them to examples of student-teacher written dialogue on student's drafts quoted in the research article and, after reading a few, commented:

> For me here, I would say 'Yes, use the present perfect', without commenting. But giving feedback on *why* he should use the present perfect is a good idea. It is better than just telling the student to use the present perfect ... (recording)

Here, there was evidence that Reem had reflected on what she used to do. Charles's article appeared to have convinced her of the inadequacy of her approach to students' texts. The "why" emerged as crucial in justifying the choice of a certain tense, word, etc. Charles's argument has convinced Reem, so why should it not convince other colleagues? That was her message, apparently, while presenting. Her enthusiasm and

that of Salma, each for her own position regarding the innovation, appeared to have impressed their audience:

> The young presenters' enthusiasm engaged our attention. We watched their performance admiringly, and this seemed to have generated more vitality and enthusiasm on their part. This was evident in the discussion time, when Salma intelligently threw the ball in our court. She urged us to spell out what we thought of 'self-monitoring'. I sensed a change in her attitude.... Reem's strong argument there and then could have influenced her. (Diary)

In her second round, Salma encouraged her colleagues, the audience, to express their views. She sounded more positive to the innovation:

> **Salma:** 'Self-monitoring' is good because it draws students' attention or awareness that they are responsible for their learning. What level, do you think, can we apply this technique at? In the article they say it is suitable for upper intermediate and advanced students ...
> **Rose:** All levels, even weak ones. You ask them to think about their writing, and you help them.
> **Salma:** So this will give some kind of self-confidence.
> **Rose:** Yes, they have to think ... when they write. It is easier than underlining or circling. Students hesitate in using grammar, punctuation, vocabulary, etc. Sometimes they are not sure which word to use ...
> **Jihad:** I use underlining.
> **Salma:** This is what some of us might be doing, but it is not self-monitoring. Self-monitoring means encouraging students to take charge of their own learning ...

Humorously trying to involve silent colleagues, Salma said: "I don't know; this part of the 'class' was very good". Turning to the others, she asked: "Does this apply to your students?" The teachers responded one by one:

> **Ola:** This applies to some students ...
> **Sadik:** I am against applying it to beginners ...
> **Sonia:** Self-monitoring might be open to self-correction, especially in relation to grammar ... if a student remembers what he has studied, he might be able to correct himself.
> **Noor:** Students *are* able to correct many of their mistakes even when they are beginners. ... when a student ... reads the text again, he reflects and corrects. ...
> **Paul:** Self-correction is always in the process of writing and revising. ...
> **Salma:** Very good. ... (recording)

It can be seen that Salma has become more positive about the idea of student self-monitoring of their writing by the end of the collaborative presentation. She appeared to have been influenced by the group's views of this feedback technique, too.

Thus, group discussion and the sharing of ideas and experiences marshalled support to the innovations beyond what I had anticipated (see also 5.4.3). For example, I did not expect Sadik to pilot "peer reviews" in the Orientation Stage and convince Ola to do so in hers without my resort to "pushing". Nor did I expect Reem to embrace my offer of working with her on researching the idea of "self-monitoring" in our Sci-Tec classes as she had expressed reluctance to carry out AR earlier, at the start of fieldwork.

Acceptability of these two feedback techniques can be interpreted in two ways. First, they fitted within the overall Centre policy of encouraging autonomous learning. Secondly, they corresponded with the teachers' own experiences and beliefs about language learning since they themselves had been autonomous learners at college level (see 2.5.2.1).

5.4 Formative Reflection and Critical Evaluation

The focus in this section is on the teachers' reflection on and evaluation of their learning from the Orientation Stage activities. Evidence is based on data obtained through feedback questionnaires. Presentation comes under the following headings that relate to the aims of the Orientation Stage activities:

- Learning about academic writing
- Learning about action research
- Receptivity to classroom innovations
- The Self and the other

5.4.1 Learning about Academic Writing

In the response questionnaire that was sent with the articles from the UK in the baseline

follow-up period, participants were asked to reflect on and critically evaluate what they learnt from each paper ("things you did not know before") and try to articulate how they would use the gained insights (see Appendix 4.3). The five teachers who responded (Table 5.2) mentioned new ideas and concepts they encountered in each paper they had time to read before the activities started. Sadik, the most articulate of the five, listed six insights he had gained from reading Bloor and St Johns's paper (1988) (and did the same thing for Hedge's and Silva's). One insight he listed was "Differences between process-oriented and product-oriented teaching" and mentioned how he would make use of the information in his work on the MEP (Material Evaluation Project):

> ... [Bloor and St John's] gives me more insight into what ... criteria
> I should follow to choose the new Core [materials]. Should I focus on the product ...,
> the process ..., both ... or should there be a third element ...?

In contrast, Hind believed that she had learnt "**Nothing**" (in the original) from Bloor and St John's. Since both teachers were novices in teaching project writing, and in view of the fact that their needs were (more or less) similar as far as the Baseline study has shown, I interpreted the differences between their evaluation of their initial learning from the papers in terms of the depth of their reading and also their self-motivation to learn, two factors that I believed were, in turn, influenced to some degree by contextual variables. Sadik returned three response sheets (Table 5.2) two days before the first DC took place, and Hind, who was very busy with examination matters and other coordination responsibilities (see 1.4.5a), returned two on the same day DC1 was held. This suggested a rather rapid review of the papers in her case. I was interested in finding out how these two teachers' critical evaluation of their learning from White's and Bloor and St John's papers would differ following their involvement in group discussion of the same papers in DC1 (see 5.2.1.1).

It became clear upon analysis of the feedback questionnaire data that all participants (readers and non-readers, novice and experienced), including Hind and

Sadik, had gained more insights and deeper understanding through group discussion. Participants' comments have been condensed and classified into four categories: concepts, methodology, innovation, and beliefs and attitudes (see Box 5.3).

Box 5.3 Teachers' evaluation of their learning from DC1 *

Concepts

- Schemata ... (Jihad; Reem, Doha, Noor)
- Writing ... process & product (Shehab; Sonia; Reem, Noor; Sadik; Ola; Hind, Jihad)
- Writing ... process of thinking (Sadik, Hind)
- Writing ... an educational tool (Hind)
- 'Education is concerned with unexpected outcomes' (Sonia)

Methodology

- Project ... writing ... teaching methodology (Ola, Abeer)
- ... how to be a supervisor ... (Sonia)
- Students [as] work planners (Noor)
- There is no one way of doing things. ... (Hind)
- ... made me more aware of what I am doing ... (Salma, Rola)

Innovation

- OPs can be given at every stage of writing. (Jihad, Salma, Reem)
- Teachers should write their own APP. (Noor, Shehab)
- ... no definite answers ... without action research (Rola)
- T should model for his SS. (Jihad)
- ... team work (Sonia)
- ... applying ... suggested methods to my class ... (Doha)

Beliefs and attitudes

- The good thing is that we were obliged to read ... (Noor; Jihad)
- Teachers should be good readers and good writers. (Noor)
- ... [discussion] makes me less frustrated ... I am not the only person ... facing problems in teaching writing. (Rola, Hind)
- We need the advice ... of ... experienced teachers. (Doha)
- DC makes me question things that I didn't question in reading. (Hind)
- "Writing is a process of thinking": I agree with this completely and reject that "writing is rewriting" ... (Sadik)

* **Note:** Where more than one name is mentioned, the quotation belongs to the first, and a similar response has been expressed by the other(s).

Three remarkable achievements of the DC activity are worth noting in relation to the data presented in Box 5.3. The first is the fact that all the participants (including those who never said a word) have learnt from the discussion and that all have emerged from the activity with different and, in some cases, same gains and impressions. Secondly, notable among the personal gains is Hind's. As we have seen, in her individual reading and evaluation, she reported learning "**Nothing**" from Bloor and St John's paper. In contrast, the teacher group discussion has made her "question things [she] did not question in reading". Other teachers expressed similar responses. Noor, for example, developed a strong belief that teachers of project writing "should be good readers and ... writers", and Rola (and Hind) has emerged more self-confident; she is not the only one suffering after all. Thirdly, Sadik's comment is interesting and enlightening on the power of teacher-teacher interaction. He seems to be rethinking his beliefs about "rewriting", an initial hard struggle with the self (see 2.5.2.3 and 6.4.1.1; cf. 5.3.2; 6.4.2 and 7.2.1).

Moreover, 14 out of 15 teachers who responded to the feedback questionnaire felt that they "did not waste [their] time coming to the DC". They gave different reasons. Sonia, for example, believed that "even if the subject was familiar in my mind in an abstract form, it has taken a ... concrete shape" through discussion.

The teachers expressed similar positive responses to other ideas and practices introduced to them in a similar or slightly different manner (DCs or OPs). A high response rate was reported in relation to the two articles on plagiarism (see reading list: Appendix 2.9) and the one on hedges (see 5.2.1.1). The vast majority of respondents to the feedback questionnaires believed that those articles were "highly relevant" to their needs. Regarding the pedagogic implications of the plagiarism articles, for example, Hind, the moderator and manager of IOP2 and DC2, summed up the discussion by drawing colleagues' attention to Pennycook's final statement in which his message to EFL/ESL teachers was embedded. She read it out loud:

> All language learning is to some extent a process of borrowing others' words and we need to be flexible, not dogmatic, about where to draw boundaries between acceptable or unacceptable textual borrowing. (Pennycook 1996: 227)

This was exactly the message I hoped the teachers would get through reading, reflecting, discussing, and evaluating Campbell (1990) and Pennycook (1996) on student plagiarism.

5.4.2 Learning about Action Research

Similarly, the AR workshop participants were asked to reflect on and evaluate their learning. All 15 respondents but one (the Director) indicated that the information presented in the workshop was "partially known" or "unknown" to them (Box 5.4).

Box 5.4 Teachers' evaluation of their learning from the AR workshop

Experienced participants

- 'Action Research' ... was the research methodology of my PhD thesis (Director).
- The information ... is very new to me (Mustafa).
- I learnt ... to think ... thoroughly about 'Action Research' (Rose).

Novice participants

- I have been reading Nunan's book ... (Sadik).
- I ... had ... ideas ... but they were not organised. ... (Ola).
- ... we knew some pieces of .. information (Salma).
- ... techniques and instruments were new to me (Abeer).

Workshop leaders

- I prepared for it [workshop] for a long time ... read a lot ... (Noor).
- ... read about it [AR] (Jihad).
- ... read most of what has been said ... (Shehab).
- (partially) ... (Rola).

Two conclusions can be drawn from participants' critical evaluation of their learning from the AR workshop. One is that most of their reading about AR was recent and motivated by the workshop and/or early involvement in AR. There are two main reasons for this. First, as was the case with the oral presentations (see 5.3.2 and 5.3.3), the workshop leaders' self-esteem was a crucial factor in encouraging their in-

depth reading and critical evaluation; they wanted to appear informed and ready for any questions. Secondly, they were aware that the workshop would be evaluated by its participants, and their self-image meant a great deal to them.

The other conclusion that can be drawn from Box 5.4 is that the majority of the ESPC teachers were in need of information about AR. This is a fact that the Centre Director was not aware of (see 2.5.2.2), and when it became clear, she found it hard to accept. She might have believed that this would reflect negatively on the Centre's reputation, which meant a great deal to her (see 7.2.2 for another interpretation).

5.4.3 Receptivity to Classroom Innovations

Participants' critical reflection on and evaluation of the "self-monitoring" and "peer reviews" feedback techniques can be found in Box 5.5.

Box 5.5 Teachers' evaluation of "peer reviews" and "self-monitoring"

Experienced Participants

- ... applicability of the two techniques ... is great ... (Rose).
- ... self-monitoring ... attracted me ... let's give it a try ... (Jihad).
- ... Self-monitoring is good to apply with advanced students ... (Noor).
- ... peer reviews ... needs psychological preparation from the side of Ss ... (Sonia).
- I'll try peer-reviewing ... self-learning is ... important ... [for] adults. ... (Shehab).
- Young hands are ... the slaves of new theories ... (Mustafa).

Novice Participants

- Peer evaluation ... is more effective with beginner students ... Self-monitoring is ... essential ... we need to train our SS in [them] ... (Hind).
- ... quite illuminating and essential ... (Rola).
- ... applicable to the ESPC context. ... I'll try [them] ... (Abeer).
- I intend to apply it [self-monitoring] in my class ... (Doha).

Presenters

- ... self-monitoring is ... new to me. I shall try ... it ... (Salma).
- ... they ... really deserve to be applied. ... (Reem).
- ... The ideas are ideal. ... ... If studied well, they'll give wonderful results (Sadik).
- The ideas are ... applicable ... according to the pilot study I did in my class (Ola).

Box 5.5 shows that the teachers' response to "self-monitoring" and "peer reviews" is positive. Except for Mustafa, they clearly desired to apply them in practice. As can be seen, colleagues who presented the articles to the group are the most enthusiastic, and the reason, I think, is that they have "lived" the ideas and reflected deeply on their relevance and viability. Moreover, peer reviews were experimented with and evaluated in practice by its presenters (see 5.3.2).

5.4.4 The Self and the Other

Self- and peer evaluation are basic principles in the AR approach to TD used in this study. Awareness of these two principles and their effect was raised in the AR workshop and through project methodology. This was achieved by an attempt to apply the principles of "Practice what you preach" (see 3.4.2.3) and "appropriate methodology" (see 4.3.3).

I was fully aware of the fact that if I wanted my colleagues to self-evaluate themselves and accept their peers' evaluation of their performance, I should be the first one to apply these principles (see Hunt 1987). Setting a good example came through the first feedback sheet on participants' formative evaluation of DC1. Instead of direct instruction, I tried to rely on the feedback sheet *and* writing to raise awareness about reflection and self- and peer evaluation and their value for TD. Through the feedback sheet, I provided the teachers with a description of my own reflections upon listening to the recording of DC1 and reading colleagues' critical comments in the feedback questionnaire:

> The discussion circle has made me aware of my own limitations as a discussion participant. I dominated some parts ... and interrupted some speakers. I need to learn more about communication with colleagues for the purpose of my personal and professional development.

I also informed them, through the feedback sheet, about my "decisions for action", expressing my desire to share my learning with them. The handouts mentioned in the extract below were given to them with the feedback sheet. I hoped that they would

look up the source, or at least read the extracts:

> I checked the ESPC library ... and found Edge's *Cooperative Development* (1992) useful. I would like to share what I have learnt with my colleagues (see handouts: excerpts from Chs. 3 & 7). ... Finally, since this was our first group attempt to discuss published literature, mistakes were inevitable. What is important, I think, is learning from our mistakes. Our performance in today's ... activities will indicate whether we are moving in the right direction. (Feedback Sheet # 1)

Following their reading of the feedback sheet, the teachers were invited to write their own individual "reflections and decisions for action" in a new "feedback on feedback questionnaire". It was intended to investigate their ability to reflect and evaluate their own performance in the light of the group's formative feedback. I found 14 reflexive comments in the new questionnaire data (see Box 5.6).

Box 5.6 Teachers' reflexive comments upon reading feedback sheet 1

Experienced Participants

- All participants are busy ... (tests, evaluating materials, teaching). Had they been with more free time they would have participated better (Noor).
- ... our financial situation is ... a great barrier ... (Jihad).
- ... Had the teachers read the articles, things would have been different (Shehab).
- Really I have no idea about the articles ... (Hanan).

Novice Participants

- ... my fault was that I didn't prepare by reading the assigned articles ... I must be more ready for the other discussions ... (Reem).
- I felt that I had not fulfilled my duty towards a colleague who had come ... to teach us and learn from us (Sadik).
- I felt ignorant because I didn't read, but it was quite informative & useful for me to listen ... (Rola).
- ... I decided to read more in depth ... (Ola).
- My role as a discussion leader was not clear to me then. ... I need to state the focus of the discussion clearly, to declare the aim of the article, to link to our context, and to draw the final image of the whole discussion ... (Hind).
- I could not participate ... because I did not read. ... I learned from my mistake. I have read the two articles required for [today's] session ... (Abeer).

Reading the feedback-on-feedback comments presented in Box 5.6, one can immediately come up with enlightening conclusions about the potential of providing teachers with feedback on their overall (group) evaluation of TD activities. Also, one can realise the vital importance of the "Practice what you preach" maxim, reflection, and critical evaluation (3.5.5 and 4.4.5).

Two other important conclusions emerge from the data presented in the Box. One relates to novice teachers and the other to experienced ones. As can be seen, the majority of reflexive comments have come from novice colleagues and are (without exception) self-evaluative. Their personal voices, the "I", come strongly, expressing regret for coming to the discussion circle inadequately prepared. More importantly is that they have learnt from their previous negative experiences, and "today" they are ready for the discussion. This conclusion comes in support of theories of personal knowledge (Polanyi 1967, 1969; Schon 1983, 1987; McNiff 1988; Whitehead 1989, 1993; see also sections 2.3; 3.4.2 and 3.5.5). It also supports the view that claims novice teachers' ability to reflect in no less effective manner than their more senior colleagues (John Elliott is prominent in this view; see 3.4.2.4).

In contrast, experienced teachers' reflexivity is mostly implied and outward-looking. The "other" is more to blame for their lack of preparedness. They indicate that they want and are willing to learn, but they are overloaded in the workplace, have other jobs to do elsewhere to feed the family, or have not been informed about the learning opportunities. These reasons can be interpreted with reference to status and self-esteem which are indispensable in the case of older teachers (see 3.3.1.4 and 3.3.2.1). It is difficult for them to blame themselves in isolation from the whole socio-economic situation in which they are placed. These teachers appear to have deeper insight, compared with their novice colleagues, into the origin of their problems but have to be cautious and tactful in pointing their fingers least others, who are close or dear to them, might be offended. In TD programmes, we need the insights and reflections of both the young and the old to balance matters and view the problems from different angles. Such a combination of insights inspires us into better strategy for action, always in pursuit of improvement.

More evidence of the value of this combination of insights and effort appears in the teachers' critical evaluation of experienced-novice teacher collaboration in the AR workshop. Fourteen out of 15 participants (one did not respond) believed that "The workshop has shown that experienced and novice teachers can equally contribute to TD activities". Teachers' justifications are significant. Here are four taken from experienced and novice teachers, including Rola, the only novice among the five AR worshop leaders:

- Novice teachers' enthusiasm can make up for their limited experience (Director).
- The novice teachers raised points and asked for explanations and this enriched the discussion (Rose).
- We have ... experienced teachers who can guide such research, [but] novice teachers mustn't be underestimated ... They must be given the chance only (Sadik).
- Novice teachers are still fresh and enthusiastic (Rola).

In contrast to this positive evaluation of teacher-teacher collaboration, participants' comments on lack of flexibility regarding the time given to the workshop carry an implicit message for those in positions of decision-making that can influence TD. Here are six representative comments:

- ... responses were listed on the board, but not well discussed because the given time was short (Rose).
- Presenters did not adhere to allotted time (Director).
- ... a negative sign was the short time given to each presentation because the subject is fresh (Jihad).
- Coming late to the workshop was a positive point (Noor).
- ... Presenters were not given equal time portions. I did not have enough time to present what I had (Shehab).
- Time was too limited ... (Rola).

As can be seen, participants' comments express an implicit disappointment that the workshop was influenced by constraints that could have been avoided through appreciation and understanding. It is interesting to see how the time factor was viewed in different ways by different participants. Rose, the trainer, felt that lack of time had a negative impact on the quality of teacher learning. The Director, on the other hand,

seemed more concerned about application of administrative rules and regulations. Noor believed that contextual constraints served the workshop well through generating teacher creativity, which turned constraints into learning opportunities (see 5.2.2). For Jihad, such a "fresh" topic as AR should have been given more time. Finally, Shehab complained about inequality; some workshop leaders were given more time than others. All in all, the teachers appeared to be arguing for space, time, flexibility, equity, and voice.

Teachers differed a great deal in their risk-taking ability (see 4.4.5). Sadik was the highest risk taker and one of the most reflexive practitioners at the ESPC (see 6.3.2.2). In his open-ended comments, he praised Noor's role in the workshop for being "flexible" and described Shehab's part as "democratic", adding: "that's what we need ... be flexible and democratic".

5.5 Summative Reflection and Critical Evaluation

This section focuses on the participants' summative reflection and evaluation of two aspects of their learning journey:

- Objectivity of teacher feedback
- Continuity

5.5.1 Objectivity of Teacher Feedback

By the end of the Orientation Stage, The participants were asked to express what they thought and felt (open-ended question) upon reading the feedback sheet that reported to them colleagues' summative evaluation of the writing-related TD activities (DCs and OPs). This was in response to lack of trust in questionnaire data on the part of the Centre Director, a kind of challenge that is quite legitimate in any type of research:

> I believe that in questionnaire writing, sometimes you can lead the respondent ... to give you the answer you want, and I believe that this is what is happening (recorded office meeting).

Twelve teachers (out of 15), who were present in the meeting on the day the questionnaire was distributed, responded. Ten were active participants in this stage. To my surprise and relief, the majority centred their reflections on the issue of credibility of teacher feedback. In the following two sections, I present eleven voices. One voice (Ola's) is presented in section 8.3.2 on "Feedback".

5.5.1.1 Experienced Participants' Perspectives

Jihad and Noor never missed a meeting. Rose missed two meetings for family reasons.

Rose: ***I recalled a busy Centre.***

Rose, the trainer, believed that the teachers' comments were "clear" and "objective":

> While reading I recalled how busy and active the Centre was. Indeed, I think the participants have achieved great progress because of the various activities they did, e.g., reading, presenting, discussing, etc. I felt satisfied to read clear and objective comments. But on the other hand, I felt sorry because I did not attend the meetings regularly and ... keep proper notes to help myself be more specific.

Jihad: ***It is a true picture.***

Reflecting on teacher feedback, Jihad described teachers' comments as "a true picture":

> It is a true picture of the Ts' thoughts of such activities. Although workshops are not new to the ESPC, Ts needed some time to be involved ... Of course benefits cannot come from the first session, but I think things are becoming clear to Ts and the work itself has become more attractive and beneficial.

Noor: ***Teachers know what they need.***

Noor focused on the teachers and their "critical points". She also sensed objectivity in their responses:

> - Teachers are effectively responding to the whole research.
> - Teachers know exactly what they need and what is exactly important to them to raise the perfection of their professionality.
> - Their critical points ... are objective and sound.

5.5.1.2 Novice Participants' Perspectives

Sadik, Reem and Abeer never missed a meeting. Hind and Salma were absent once each, when circumstances were hard (e.g., illness).

Sadik: ***I was totally converted.***

Sadik reflected on the feedback sheet and situated himself in the overall picture critically and reflexively:

> Being exposed to various responses, I felt myself in every place viewing the DCs from different angles using many eyes. I often accused others of being careless when attending a DC or not reading at home what we are supposed to read. While reading I was totally converted. It is others' views and evaluation that I need to improve myself and mine; ... It is collaboration at all levels that we need.

Reem: ***I felt happy and proud.***

Reem was proud and happy to be "with these colleagues". She explained:

> Really I felt happy and proud to be in this Centre with these colleagues. Why? Because:
> - All the answers were frank, honest and mature, even from the NT's, the thing that shows that the respondents are responsible, reliable and more important jealous for the benefit of the Centre ...
> - The answers show that the respondents are aware and admit their mistakes (not being prepared or enthusiastic, time, lack of organisation) the thing that may pave the way to a better situation.

Abeer: ***This feedback has given me a clear idea.***

Abeer, the youngest among the young, reflected on the positive and negative signs in the feedback sheet and made an implicit suggestion:

> This feedback sheet has given me a clear idea about my colleagues' responses ... It is helpful to know other teachers' responses and opinions, although I might disagree with some of them. I got the feeling that most teachers are really interested in the activities being done and have the tendency to read and participate in order to make the meetings fruitful.

Hind and Salma: ***Unanimity / Different teachers, different attitudes***

Hind and Salma wrote brief comments. In Hind's view, "all the teachers enjoyed and benefited from the previous activities". Salma, on the other hand, believed that

"Different teachers had different attitudes to the points" discussed, but it seemed to her that "they share a common ground [as] "Most of them agree on the same points." She feels that "what is being done by the researcher is great and interesting".

Rola and Paul: ***A bit confusing / What was the point?***

Rola, a Coordinator and one of the most overloaded among the Centre teachers, expressed a sense of uncertainty about what the CAWRP was exactly trying to achieve, though she was basically interested in its activities:

> The majority of the teachers like myself are interested in both the DCs and COPs. But I find it a bit confusing sometimes to decide on the final aim or main focus of the meetings. Is it just exchanging information and experience concerning writing? Sometimes it seems like that. (Rola)

Similar questions were raised by Paul, our novice expatriate colleague, who had recently joined the Centre. He offered the researcher "a little reminder":

> What was the point of all this? What are we trying to accomplish? I have no doubt that the one doing the research knows, but this research has been going on for some time. I would suggest a little reminder for encouragement before all participants question the relevance of this project and consider it a waste of their valuable time. ...

The conclusion one can draw from these responses and reactions is that participants who regularly attend TD actvities in such a project are more likely to read project announcements, materials, and reports. Therefore, they become clear about project aims and objectives and, hence, more likely to develop a positive attitude to it if it meets their needs and expectations. In contrast, teachers who rarely attend activities are likely to become alienated and less enthusiastic about the research. The lesson interventionist researchers can learn from this explanation is that discordant voices need more attention and perhaps a different strategy for involving them and generating the best of their potential. One such strategy that relatively succeeded with Rola and Paul was inviting them to lead project activities that would put them in the spotlight and challenge them intellectually (see 5.2.2.2 and Table 5.1).

5.5.2 Continuity

Continuity is a basic criterion in TAR (Allwright 1993). Development is an ongoing process, not a one-shot course. This aspect was investigated with regard to two main themes:

(a) Methodological continuity: This involves participants' evaluation of project methodology in the Orientation Stage and their desirability for going on using it or otherwise.

(b) Stage continuity: This involves participants' willingness to continue or move on to the Research and Reporting Stage in the project (see section 1.6.2).

5.5.2.1 Methodological Continuity

Though participants' desire to continue the processes they have experienced is implicit in the evidence presented earlier, their explicit commitment to go on using and improving them was believed to be essential for clarity of purpose on short- and long-term bases. This commitment was investigated through the feedback questionnaires, especially the summative ones. By the end of the Orientation Stage, there was a need to find out whether or not project participants **(a)** were still interested in receiving feedback and, if yes, the extent of details they desired; **(b)** would read more in depth for future TD activities of the kind they had experienced; **(c)** believed that TD activities (DCs, OPs, etc.) should continue to be used at the ESPC; and **(d)** were willing to contribute to those activities. Except for **(a)**, participants were asked to comment on their answers: ("why" or "why not"). The findings are as follows:

- Fourteen of the 15 respondents to the summative end-of-Stage-One feedback questionnaire selected "interested" "in knowing other colleagues' responses and requested "fairly detailed" reports. Sonia was "not interested". I have found difficulty in interpreting her answer, and I did not have the chance to ask her about

the reason.

- All 15 respondents selected "I have decided to read all the articles" for any future DCs, COPs, or IOPs". Two of them crossed out "all" and wrote "most".

Their justifications seem to be embedded in their experience of the activities. All 15 respondents indicated that the way they had read the articles affected their participation and, hence, their learning. They pointed out that in-depth reading had a positive effect, whereas lack of reading impacted negatively on their participation and learning (see Box 5.7)

Box 5.7 Justifications for the decision to read actively for future activities

Experienced Participants

- ... Knowing ... could enrich the way I participated (Noor).
- I took notes before and during the OPs and participated in the discussion (Jihad).
- I could follow the discussion easily; ... I was well-prepared (Sonia).
- I read 3 in depth. ... reading has affected the way I participated (Rose).
- [read none] I Should have read ... (Mustafa).

Novice Participants

- With regard to those read in depth I was at a better stand in the discussion. (Salma)
- ... preparation is ... important to feel involved ... I felt sorry when I attended the first DC unprepared ... (Reem).
- ... He who knows has more to say; ... I didn't participate today because I read few pages only and ... didn't know the ... meaning of "hedges" ... (Sadik).
- [read a few] I was overloaded with personal and professional occupations. (Hind)
- ... In-depth reading ... makes the person more aware of the ideas ... (Abeer).

Participants' awareness of the importance of reading is clear in their responses and regrets. Hind implicitly indicates that her leading role in the MEP (Material Evaluation Project) has affected her reading and hence her participation in the CAWRP. Like the rest, she was unable to cope with the requirements of two projects, and had to opt for the one she was co-leading.

As for items (c) and (d) of the investigation, the findings were as follows:

- Fourteen participants selected "Agree" in response to the statement "I believe that DCs, COPs, and IOPs should be built into any inservice teacher development programme at the ESPC". One selected "Disagree".
- Fourteen selected "Agree" in response to the statement "I will do all I can to attend such activities if they are held at the ESPC whether I will be paid or not"; one wrote "It depends".

The teachers gave various justifications for agreeing or disagreeing. Both novices and experienced colleagues seem supportive to continuity (but see Sonia's point in Box 5.8).

Box 5.8 Justifications for future use of DCs and OPs in inservice at the ESPC

Experienced Participants

- Results cannot hide themselves. ... (Jihad).
- ... [They] keep teachers in contact ... can enrich each others' experience (Noor).
- A good presence is a letter of recommendation (Shehab).
- (Disagree) ... the job is too demanding, therefore we cannot enjoy nor give the matter its due value (Sonia).

Novice Participants

- DCs, OPs can improve teaching and understanding of each other's problems (Hind).
- ... can help build self-confidence (Salma).
- ... unify teachers' scope ... [and]... teaching and learning attitudes. ... (Sadik).
- ... strengthen the sense of family at the Centre (Ola).
- ... we need [them] to know and learn new ideas and approaches (Abeer).

As can be seen in Box 5.8, both experienced and novice teachers' justifications are plausible. Jihad's justification represents the voices of experienced colleagues, who seem to have given a vote of confidence to the activities. In Shehab's view, teachers' rate of attendance carries the implicit message of "recommendation". Novices' justifications unanimously indicate the great extent the activities have been able to meet their needs on different levels: cognitively, affectively, and socially.

Sonia's justification of her "Disagree" is no less plausible. She is known among us for her commitment to teaching. One striking characteristic of her responses is consistency. In the baseline interview, for example, she was the only teacher who expressed a belief that "Teacher research affects teaching negatively ... because the teacher will need to focus on the research rather than teaching". In her evaluation of DC1 at the start of the Orientation Stage, she wrote:

> The DC was no doubt successful and useful, but it would be more if done sometime else, ... not during our teaching period when we are overloaded. I myself was rather worried with other obligations we had, which are now to be rushed. (28 November 1996)

She expressed the same view in the summative feedback questionnaire:

> I want to stress that ... it's a matter of doing [them] at a right time (non-teaching time, even during the summer holiday) in order to benefit fully. (16 January 1997)

Her argument, in short, was for allocating time and space for such TD activities and also for TAR.

Regarding payment for attending the activities, the majority stressed the point that they were not after money. Paul, the expatriate colleague, was the only one who pointed out that "it would be nice if [he] could have at least ten pounds" for transport. Sadik wrote he would "give up the money ... for teachers who will come only if they are paid ...". Here are two other comments, one from an experienced colleague and the other from a novice:

> - ... if I don't get the payment, at least I get the knowledge (Noor).
> - Benefit is not only financial. ... These activities enrich my knowledge, so why shouldn't I come even if I am not paid? ... you cannot imagine how much benefit I got ... listening to ideas of other teachers (Abeer).

I tend to believe that "freedom to learn" has motivated the teachers to attend and contribute with pleasure. Some (e.g., Sonia and Rose) did not sign up for the project and others were not at the ESPC in the Baseline Phase (e.g., Abeer and Paul), but they attended all or some of the Orientation Stage meetings. The most important

factor that generated participants' positive response, in my view, was the potential of those activities in meeting the participants' needs academically, professionally, affectively, and socially. This can be seen in comments that stress continuity or generalizability:

> - DC is helpful and beneficial when it becomes an ongoing process (a tradition) and not an occasion (Jihad).
>
> - I wish we would have more OPSs in the future, because I believe they are more beneficial than we can imagine. We, teachers in the ESPC, hardly have time to discuss ideas, and the OPs give us the opportunity to meet and to be open to each others' points of views and ways of thinking. This, consequently will result in the success and prosperity of the ESPC as an educational institution (Ola).
>
> - It would be more encouraging if [they] were extended to other teaching institutions in Syria ... (Sadik).

The teachers, in short, have endorsed and supported the CAWRP methodology. This has come about through living and experiencing it in action and through seeing and feeling its effect on them and their students. They, in other words, have generated their theory of TD methodology from practising it, and they want this practice-generated theory to continue till a better alternative can be found.

5.5.2.2 Stage Continuity and Its Challenges

Participants' decision for stage continuity was investigated in the AR workshop feedback questionnaire. I wanted to find out whether or not the workshop participants **(a)** were willing to move to the second stage and carry out classroom research, and, if "yes", how (collaboratively or individually); and **(b)** felt the need for a supervisor, if they wanted to continue. Participants were also asked to give their reasons for selecting their course of action.

In answer to **(a)**, eight of the 14 teachers who responded to the questionnaire (nine including myself) selected "I will do action research", four "I will not", and two were hesitant. Seven of the eight who "will do action research" wanted to work in

collaboration with their course colleagues. The teacher who selected "individually", explained his preference in terms of the time constraint (see Box 5.9).

Box 5.9 Participants' response to carrying out AR in Stage Two

Experienced Participants

- [will not] Because of age (Rose).
- "Undecided" ... (Director).
- ... because I get many things out of it [Mustafa).

Novice Participants

- Whether I get an approval ... to go to Tunisia or not, I intend to continue ... (Sadik).
- [It] will help me improve ... as a teacher ... [and] a member of a larger system: The E.S.P. Centre (Ola).
- I liked the idea of "self-monitoring" ... and I am eagerly waiting for the results (Reem).
- I like to share my ideas with ... colleagues and let them know about my findings (Abeer).
- ... it depends on my psychological condition (Doha).
- I don't have time (Shaza; Ameen).

AR Workshop Leaders

- Although the time given is too short ... I will start my AR (Jihad).
- It is interesting and challenging to get involved in ... action research ... (Noor).
- Being involved in such a project is in itself part of my existence ... (Shehab).
- (will not) Time constraint (Rola).

Box 5.9 shows that all the teachers except the Director and Doha made up their minds one way or another. The teachers were frank about their reasons. The Director was teaching the APP to a Med group and, like all of us, admitted openly that she was facing challenges. In one of my Office meetings with her, I expressed my belief that her "participation", in addition to her supervisory role, would motivate us a great deal. She promised to think about it, saying: "I actually prefer to carry out ...

research than supervise it because at least I will come up with something tangible ...".

Box 5.9 also shows that the teachers who "will do action research" were the same teachers who had been actively involved in the Orientation Stage activities. They include both experienced and novice teachers. All except Mustafa were Core (reading) and APP teachers. This is a highly significant response if we consider that Core/APP teachers at the ESPC were the most overloaded and constrained by time. As can be seen (Box 5.9), the AR workshop leaders (except for Rola, who led in the workshop in place of Hind) are highly motivated to continue. This can be explained in terms of their becoming well-informed about AR in the process of their learning about it in order to lead the workshop.

As for the need for a "supervisor", the finding was surprising and rather unexpected. All those who opted to carry out AR selected "I need a supervisor" and all, except Noor, explained their reasons. Here are examples of the responses of experienced and novice teachers:

- Time constraint (Jihad).
- we all need somebody with a better experience to look at our work from a different perspective (Shehab).
- ... a new area in my learning (Mustafa).
- I am a novice teacher who needs guiding. ... (Sadik, Ola, Reem, Abeer).

This response is indicative of the success of the Orientation Stage in enhancing collegiality and promoting humility (see Allwright 1993; Jersild 1955).

Teachers' need for supervisors, in spite of its very positive indications, created the unexpected challenge of finding colleagues who were both qualified and willing to help. Nidal, a PhD holder, had left the Centre by that time, and the Director said she had time to supervise one only and selected Noor for unknown reasons (see 6.3.2.2). Hind was also approached for help but apologised. I discussed this problem with Shehab, whose MA research was in the area of academic writing. We agreed to help each other and make ourselves available to colleagues who would approach us for

advice. Eventually, the majority of us, the teacher-researchers, exchanged our abstracts, research records, and conference paper drafts as much as time allowed.

5.6 Summary

This chapter reports the findings related to the Orientation Stage. It shows the extent to which the project has been able to meet its participants' needs in relation to raising their awareness of necessary concepts, ideas, and practices for effective teaching/learning of academic writing and carrying out action research. The teachers were encouraged and supported to take charge of their learning. Tasks were divided and distributed according to their self-expressed wishes, wants, and potentials (Baseline Phase). Interaction, dialogue, and critical reflection and evaluation were the tools and mediators of both teacher development and pedagogic innovation. The participants were encouraged to reflect on and critically evaluate all project activities, materials, ideas, and methodology. Evidence presented in this chapter suggests that the majority have responded positively to the research/development approach, and there are strong indications of teacher learning. Attendance rate was high and receptivity to the new ideas was generally positive. Objectivity and honesty of the participants' comments have been checked for consistency through their own perspectives, as individuals and as a group, and shown to be sound and reliable. Application of the "Practise what you preach" maxim has proved to be effective in lowering participants' affective barriers. Summative evaluation shows that the majority want the activities to continue to be used at the ESPC. Also, nine active participants, eight of whom are APP teachers, have chosen to proceed to the Research and reporting Stage.

The next Chapter provides further evidence to substantiate the potential of TAR in meeting the participants' need for continuous professional development. Its main focus is the first-order action research, and it takes the form of case studies.

CHAPTER SIX

The Research and Reporting Stage

6.1 Introduction

This chapter attempts to answer two research questions, using the case study method of presentation. In Chapter 4, I have discussed the rationale behind this kind of presentation (see section 4.3.6). There is also a comment on it in the discussion chapter (see 8.4e). The two research questions answered are:

- In what ways do teacher-initiated action research (TAR) and related activities contribute to participants' development?
- What can we discover about the interrelationship between teacher development (TD) and classroom innovation?

The case studies are of two full-participant teachers, Noor and Sadik. The former is experienced (25 years) and the latter is novice (2 years). Noor carried out AR individually, and Sadik did so in collaboration with Ola, a novice like himself. The case studies start with a description of the entry point, the baseline, focusing, in each case, on the teacher's needs and beliefs that unfolded in her/his story in the in-depth interviews (see 2.4.2.1 and 2.5.2). Evidence of Noor's and Sadik's development comes from different sources: transcripts of recorded meetings, participant observation notes, classroom observation notes, feedback questionnaires, and their diaries and conference papers. The chapter starts with some basic information that shows resources and constraints on TAR at this stage. It is mainly factual and documentary.

6.2 Some Basic Information

- Nine CAWRP participants (including the researcher) out of a total of 20 Orientation Stage participants (see 4.5.2) chose to carry out classroom AR. Five had teaching experience ranging between 10 and 30 years (22 on average). The other four were novices whose experience ranged between two weeks and two years. Five out of the nine teacher-researchers worked on individual projects, mainly because their course partners chose not to undertake AR (see 5.5.2.2). The other four worked in teams, a pair each (Sadik and Ola; Sada and Reem).
- Two feedback studies, "peer reviews" (Mangelsdorf 1992) and "self-monitoring" (Charles 1990), were adapted for experimentation in the Med and Sci-Tec courses, respectively. This is in addition to team writing, which was widely accepted by medical students in the classes in which teachers introduced it (8 out of 11).
- Five teachers, two in collaboration (Noor, Shehab, Sada, and Sadik *and* Ola) sent abstracts of their AR to the Third Maghreb ESP Conference in Tunis (27 February-1 March 1997). All were accepted, and the four papers were presented.
- The teacher-researchers exchanged critical feedback on their research in progress in a kind of validation meeting (see 3.5.3). The main purpose of this meeting was teacher support and development rather than strict scrutiny of the research reports. However, the meeting was scheduled by the administration on the day that preceded the mid-term holiday and the feast at the end of the holy month of Ramadan (6 February 1997). Attendance, therefore, was the lowest since fieldwork started. Seven teacher-researchers were the main attendants. Another meeting was held on 20 February and was devoted to three conference presentations. The administration did not allow time for non-conference teachers, though they were ready and willing. That meeting was the last held.
- The Director announced the end of the CAWRP officially, in writing, while we were in Tunis. No reasons were stated. Upon our return, she asked me to stop teaching, saying that she had taken the decision in the interest of the Centre and its students.

- Nine Master's classes out of 15 (about 68% of the total) were involved in classroom research through their teachers' involvement: about 65 % of the Med, 50% of the Hum, and all (100%) Sci-Tec students. In the case of Sci-Tec, three of the four teachers involved in teaching this course carried out AR (Mustafa, Reem, Sada), and the fourth (Doha) participated in the Orientation Stage activities.
- Five of the nine teachers involved in teaching the Med course carried out action research (Jihad, Noor, Shehab, Sadik, and Ola). Three of the remaining four participated in the Orientation Stage activities, two occasionally and one moderately. The fourth was unable to attend but received all project materials, memos, etc.
- Except for two (Mustafa and Sada), the teachers who chose to carry out classroom research were teaching their groups all or the major course components.
- All the researchers except Mustafa reported on their research once, four of them twice. Mustafa had difficult family circumstances and was unable to attend meetings in Stage Two; his research is considered incomplete.
- Four teachers (Noor, Shehab, Sadik and Ola) were able to complete their AR research and write it up. Reem and Sada collected rich classroom data but were unable to write up the second part of their report for lack of time (see Appendix 6.1).
- Shehab was unable to get an entry visa to Tunis in time because of his nationality, and the Director appointed Sadik to present his paper at the conference.
- Two teachers received conference grants from the Med-Campus Project funds (see 1.4.6.4), and one was sponsored by USIS. I was mainly self-financed, with partial support from CELTE at Warwick.
- My Tunis conference paper was on teacher development (Daoud 1997c): "Teacher response to reading the literature and its implications". Four colleagues (one doing a PhD in the UK at the time) attended the presentation and evaluated it later in a meeting held at the conference site.

Tables 6.1 and 6.2 give more basic information.

Table 6.1 The Teacher-Researchers and Their Research

Researcher(s)	Course & No of Classes out of Total	Area of Research	Research (Paper) Title
Noor (ET)	Dentists (1 of 2)	• Learner autonomy	"When students choose for themselves"
Jihad (ET)	Med (1 of 9)	• Management of innovation	"Making collaborative APP writing more efficient"
Shehab (ET)	Med (2 of 9)	• Learner strategies	"Arab students' writing strategies in L1 and L2: Teacher intervention and the issue of transfer"
Mustafa (ET)	Sci-Tec (1 of 2)	• Writing conventions	"Paragraph writing: Theory and practice"
Abeer (NT)	Hum (1 of 2)	• Testing	"Testing for teaching/learning writing"
Sadik and Ola (NTs)	Med (2 of 9)	• Collaborative writing	"Reading and Peer- editing in EFL/ESP academic writing classes"
Reem and Sada (NT and ET)	Sci-Tec (2 of 2)	• Feedback on writing	"Students' written feedback on their writing"

Table 6.2 Meetings in the Research and Reporting Stage

Meeting (site)	Date	Time	Aim(s)	Participants
Progress Presentations (ESPC)	6 Feb. 1997	2.30 hrs	• To report teacher research in progress and learn from one another through sharing discoveries and asking questions. • To get critical response on the meeting.	Full attendance • Jihad, Noor, Sadik, Ola, Sada Reem, Abeer, Partial • Hind (1st part) • Director (2nd part)
Conference Presentations (ESPC)	20 Feb. 1997	2 hrs	• To practise giving a conference presentation and get oral feedback for improvement.	Full attendance (12) Partial Director; Shehab
Feedback on the Presentations (Tunis)	1 March 1997	40 mins	• To get peer feedback on the conference presentations for learning purposes.	4 (+ 1 peer-guest)

6.3 Noor's Development

6.3.1 The Baseline

6.3.1.1 The "Story" of Learning and Teaching Writing

Like the majority of colleagues, Noor seemed to have been a self-reliant learner. She was unique in her emphasis on freedom and free learning tasks:

> [At school] I used to write some paragraphs in English myself, without the teacher asking me. ...
>
> [At college] I liked writing only when I wrote things for myself ... I didn't like forced tasks ... they are not interesting.

In her "story" of teaching writing, Noor seemed to have mixed feelings about herself. Being an ESP teacher makes her "feel proud ... really", though the job "needs much work ... giving a lot and expecting a little" in return. Asked to rate herself as a teacher of APP writing, she laughed and said: "I don't know really; maybe I'll give myself a fair mark". Her answer to another question made me think that she might have some lack of self-confidence in relation to teaching the APP:

> I like it, but I don't think I can be that. I teach academic writing now, but it doesn't mean I'd like to be a specialist in that. ... I prefer reading . ...

What Noor disliked about teaching the APP was her inability to meet all her "students' needs in the short time available". Had she had "the freedom to choose what to teach," she said, she "wouldn't choose the APP in the conditions we are in". "Students are not prepared to write a sentence, and they are asked to write a project; so it is difficult ... for both students to learn and teacher to teach". As I probed deeper to find out more about the source of her anxiety, I found that the main reason was inexperience in research and writing. She had "never carried out a research" or written a paper. She was also unclear about her role in the APP class. Asked to describe it in a few words or phrases, she said: "supervisor", "guide", "consultant". She assumed those roles, she

said, because "We were told not to correct for the students". She wondered whether that was "possible" in view of "students' language level".

Weak students figured prominently in Noor's "story" of teaching writing. Asked how she dealt with their problems, she mentioned asking them to "repeat and repeat". "I always show them their mistakes, draw their attention to what they should do and then say: 'Go and write again, and again ... This helps ... to improve their writing ...," she explained. She also expressed a strong belief in the role of teacher encouragement in motivating students: "I always have some sweets in my bag to reward good answers". "They respond well ..., though they are adults," she said. Noor worries "if some of her students fail" and blames herself if this happens: "Why couldn't I help them?". She worries about herself and "about what other people say about [her] students," as she explained. In her view, "no student is hopeless" and "all ... have the potential to improve, given the right conditions and opportunities".

6.3.1.2 Awareness of Theory

Like the majority of colleagues, Noor was unclear about the basic concepts relevant to teaching research and writing. Her needs became apparent in her answers to questions that probed awareness of some basic concepts and practices. Her answer to a question on "the approach" she believed was "followed at the Centre for teaching the APP" was: "Well, I think I have an idea, but I don't know whether it is correct; I think it is just preparing students as future researchers for studying abroad". I asked the question in a different manner:

> **Sada:** Is the focus on the process or product?
> **Noor:** ... I think ... the product.
> **Sada:** What makes you think so?
> **Noor:** Because we ask students to do action research.
> **Sada:** What do you mean by action research?
> **Noor:** Action research depends on new facts, ... analysing, studying cases, bringing new ideas and then putting these ideas on paper ...

Apparently Noor was unclear about the concepts of process-product and AR.

6.3.1.3 Beliefs about Collaboration

As it was the case with all the teachers I interviewed, Noor's beliefs about collaboration were investigated. In principle, she viewed collaboration as "essential" in all contexts and at different levels and put more emphasis on collaboration in teaching/learning the APP: "because ... it is ... problematic ...". However, her collaboration with colleagues and students seemed to be influenced by personal, contextual, and cultural factors. She thinks "about the problems" that face her "first" on her own, and discusses "*some* ... with ... students": "If I fail ... I seek help from colleagues". Time and face-saving factors seemed to be influential in this regard. She supported the idea of "team writing" and agreed to experiment with it in the coming academic year. Similarly, she responded positively to the idea of teacher team work in the proposed CAWRP, but was "uncertain" whether the conditions would support implementation (see 2.5.2.3 for other perspectives; and 6.4.1.3).

I believed that Noor would benefit a good deal from the CAWRP and that other participants would learn from her experience. As we have seen in Chapter 5, her contribution was instrumental in her own as well as group learning (see 5.1.2.1, for example). In the next section, I focus on her development in the Research and Reporting Stage.

6.3.2 The Research and Reporting Stage

Noor's development in the Research and Reporting Stage can be seen in three aspects that characterise TAR: research and pedagogy, reflection and reflexivity, and classroom innovation.

6.3.2.1 Research and Pedagogy

Noor's learning journey started with her attraction to AR through reading McNiff's book, *Action Research: Principles and Practice* (1988) and other materials (see Table 5.2). Her potential as a teacher-researcher unfolded and became clearer in the process of her AR.

As indicated earlier (Table 6.1), Noor's AR was in the area of learner autonomy. In her first progress presentation, she focused on the process of her research and seemed to have adopted the AR procedure in Richards and Lockhart (1994: 27-8; see also 3.5.2.2; 4.5.1; and 4.5.3.2). The five steps (initial reflection, planning, action, observation, and reflection) were identifiable in her report. She

- identified the problem:

> In previous courses I noticed that students and I got bored with the materials and kind of activities. Once they wanted me to give them a song because they were tired. ...

- decided to intervene and started with exploring her students' needs and wants:

> I gave students a questionnaire to identify their problems and preferences.

- acted depending on the findings and her own perception of a "solution".

> I asked the students to select research articles in their fields of study - articles they would like to read and work on during the course. ... Soon a pile of 45 articles stood on my desk. Students were enthusiastic ... Now they are doers ... not only takers.

- searched for a research focus:

> What point do I want to examine? ... And I decided to focus on how they develop their writing ... because writing emerged as a priority in their needs.

- started to collect data. Because they were weak in writing, she asked them to "write sentences" first. She was "still in the process of collecting data".

- put a future action plan. It covered the next step only:

> Well, the next thing I want them to do is to interview teachers. This involves writing questions and their answers. I think they will like it. That's it.

"She breathed deeply ... Colleagues responded by a long applause. She looked happy" (fieldnote). Addressing her critical friends, she said: "Well, I need your help ... What do you think?"

Noor's progress presentation provided further evidence of her developing awareness of AR. The steps she followed showed that she was building on what she

had already learnt in the Orientation Stage (see 5.2.2.1). Her investigation of her students' needs and wants and the subsequent decision to focus on writing can be interpreted with reference to awareness of theory and practice and her acceptance of the CAWRP: aims and methodology.

Critical friends' questions and queries provided Noor with more impetus for learning and helped to throw more light on her beliefs and values as a teacher-researcher. Colleagues who listened to her report (Jihad, Sadik, Ola, Reem, Abeer, Hind, and Sada) were teaching the APP. All, except Hind, were also involved in AR. Some of their questions focused on research and others on pedagogy. A few were challenging to her as beginner researcher:

> **Hind:** (smiling) What is your aim?
> **Noor:** I want students to do things themselves.
> **Hind:** Why?
> **Noor:** I want other teachers to accept the idea that when students choose for themselves, they work harder and improve faster.
> **Sada:** You mentioned that your students selected 45 articles. Do you have time to cover all of them?
> **Noor:** Of course not. I looked at the articles at home and saw that they could be used for different purposes: abstract teaching, non-verbal devices, introduction, etc. Some are useless. ...
> **Hind:** Do you take the level of difficulty ... into consideration?
> **Noor:** I try to. I tell my students that I am selecting from their selection ...

Sadik and Ola wondered whether the students were interested in one another's selections and asked about resistance to change:

> **Sadik:** I doubt that all students will be interested in each other's selections.
> **Noor:** I agree with you. It is a hard job that we are doing.
> **Ola:** Did the students show any rejection to your attempt to give them control over their process of learning writing?
> **Noor:** Not rejection. They can see that I am with them all the time. I come *before* them to the classroom, and I go *after* them out of the classroom. ... They see that when they give me homework the next day it is looked at; they know I am working.

The most challenging questions were the ones on research methodology, but Noor seemed well-prepared:

> **Sada:** How are you collecting your data?
> **Noor:** I have ... writing sentences ... I have paragraphs from students' diaries. I also have their abstracts.
> **Sada:** How are you going to analyse these texts?
> **Noor:** Well, I can compare the same student's writing in the first week and the fourth week ... .
> **Sada:** Do you intend to use other tools later on?
> **Noor:** ... At the end ... I am going to ... interview some students ...

These extracts yield several insights into Noor's development as a teacher-researcher. First, they suggest that her choice of topic and aim of research might have been influenced by the CAWRP's experiential approach to learning and her first-hand experience of its value. She was receptive to this approach, which seemed to be consistent with her beliefs and values (see 6.3.1.1). A second aspect of development is her reliance on authentic articles. This could also be prompted by her increased awareness of theory and practice (see 5.2.1.2). Thirdly, Ola's question about learner resistance probed Noor's philosophy of teaching. She is committed to her students, working "with them all the time", so why should they reject her sincere efforts? Noor's philosophy is similar to that articulated in McNiff (1988) and could have been influenced by it. McNiff believes that success of AR projects, big or small, depends mainly on teacher "**commitment**". Finally, Noor's tolerance of her critical friends' challenges is a significant indication of her development. She is no longer fearful of discussing problems with them (see 6.3.1.3). Collaboration seems to have transformed her attitude, as can be seen in her feedback on the progress report meeting:

> Although the number of the audience was not very encouraging, I think the whole meeting was beneficial. As a participant, I felt I needed that meeting. The feedback I got from my colleagues was of great help to me. The way the other colleagues ... presented their work helped me to reflect on my own work. I have to thank you for all that.

6.3.2.2 Reflection and Reflexivity

Further evidence of Noor's development in the Research and Reporting Stage emerged in the product of her AR, her conference paper. The difficulties that faced the CAWRP at this stage seemed to have greatly influenced her "theorising" about the potential of AR in her students' development. As we have seen in the previous section, her main focus was learner autonomy. But in her write up, she extended the concept to include teacher autonomy as well. This might explain her behaviour in the conference presentation meeting at the ESPC:

> Noor was breathless throughout her presentation. Initially, I interpreted her breathlessness in terms of excitement for getting funding for her conference trip to Tunisia. Later on, it became evident that she was excited, and perhaps worried, about announcing her findings: what she had learnt from her AR (Diary).

In the course of her own AR and that of her colleagues, Noor witnessed several instances when TAR was challenged in the way McNiff, the writer who had influenced her, has indicated (see 3.5.6.2). Her awareness of the political aspects of collaborative TAR challenged her creativity in search for a "solution" that would make everyone at the Centre happy and found the answer in student and teacher autonomy. She knew that no one could object to such a proposition since it was a basic value in the declared ESPC methodology. Noor wanted rhetoric to match reality. Intelligently, she projected the stated/desired curriculum methodology and the hidden one side by side in her "Context of the Study" section of her conference paper:

> In 1996, a second cycle of Material Evaluation Project was carried on [sic] and teachers' feedback showed a great need for change. Director and teachers decided that the change was to aim at having more interesting and more specialized and up-to-date materials. There was unanimous agreement on the basic skills ..., and more importance was to be given to writing the Academic Project Paper. ...

This extract represents the stated/desired curriculum methodology. Collaboration is at its best and agreement is "unanimous". Noor's next paragraph, however, shows a rather contrasting picture:

> Teachers were authorized to select materials for their classes. Some teachers wanted to stick to the old materials. ... Other teachers decided to try out selecting materials, piloting them, and evaluating their validity. ...

Noor's context knowledge increased during the CAWRP implementation. She, therefore, stretched her theme and imagination and came up with a creative response to context exigencies.

Thirteen teachers, including the Director, were Noor's audience when she presented her conference paper at the Centre one week before the regional conference. In this presentation (unlike the case in the previous one), she cited the literature to support her claims. "Her thesis statement came loud and clear, carried on the waves of her breathless voice" (Diary):

> Liz Nakhoul's (1993) words ignited something in my mind, and I wanted to start from where she stopped. Liz said:
>
> 'Individuals, both learners *and* teachers, can be empowered professionally and personally if they let go of inhibitions and work in a non-competitive environment of mutual trust, respect and support.'
>
> In this paper I report on classroom research that tries to further investigate, implement, and evaluate the effectiveness of giving students *and* teacher the freedom to choose and order reading and writing materials and related tasks and activities. The significant assumption was that better academic reading and writing could be brought about through student *and* teacher independent selection of course materials.

Noor presented her research in a series of seven steps, describing what she and her students did in each step and evaluating the outcome before moving to the next one. The following extract from my diary describes colleagues' response, Noor's behaviour, and my own interpretation:

> Eyes were fixed on her. She was constantly breathless. Occasionally she laughed at her own uncontrollable condition, and this triggered our laughter ... Upon hearing her thesis statement, my mind switched to interpreting her breathlessness in a different light. There was a moral message embedded in that thesis. Her thesis was embedded in her love and care for all those around her ...

As we have seen in Chapters Three and Four (3.4.2 and 4.4.5), reflection is believed to be an important factor in actualising teacher learning. Without reflection, no change will take place (Wallace 1991). There is a good deal of evidence to support this proposition in this study, and in Noor's case, the evidence is striking. Noor's reflections in her AR write up tend to be more of the moral/ethical type (see 3.4.2.4). There are several examples in her paper. "Freedom" and its connotations and metaphors are recurrent features in her text:

> The freedom they [students] felt in talking about their lingual problems illuminated the discussion. Being released from tension in a non-threatening atmosphere, they gave clear realistic description of their suffering from language learning whether in college or in their past secondary schools.

Empowered with knowledge of theory and practice, Noor is now clear as to how to help her students and alleviate their suffering. The first thing she did was to provide them with a "non-threatening atmosphere". This can be seen in what her students have written in their diaries. One student describes in a short paragraph her first encounter with Noor's approach and her response to it. The extract is taken from an appendix in Noor's conference paper (as in original):

> Immediatly after we Interred the class the teacher began explaining about teaching method and as my expectation no arabic has been used and that caused me some difficulties, But what facilitate this, that the techer was so nice that we didn't feel as students but like college [i.e., colleagues] and she chose the demokratic way contrary to what we used and that caused us relief. ...

Students' need for autonomy and their appreciation of being treated as "colleagues" are clear. Noor carried this message on in her conference paper and projected it strongly and convincingly. She perceived a reciprocal relationship between student and teacher autonomy; one cannot exist without the other.

As Noor mentioned in the baseline interview and again in her paper, students were suffering from writing. Through the learning opportunities with which she provided her class, her students progressed "from writing sentences, to writing paragraphs", and finally, "to writing sections of their projects". To support her claims

about her students' development in writing, Noor provided her audience with several appendices that showed their improvement. The effect of "putting the steering wheel" in her hand to generate her own development in teaching/learning writing appeared to have motivated her even more to do the same with her students:

> 'What happens when teachers share decision-making with their students?', and 'Are authentic materials more effective in bringing about learning than materials written specifically for the classroom?'. David NUNAN (1993). Having NUNAN's questions probing in my mind ..., I decided to find out an answer by starting the journey of : plan → act → reflect hand in hand with my students. ... The idea of putting the steering wheel in their hands flashed in my mind along with Nunan's questions. ...

Her description of what she and her students did in "STEP 7", the final one in her AR spiral, carried an implicit moral message that she wanted her Centre audience to reflect on and understand:

> One more step ... to check about their writing. I asked each student to prepare for an interview with somebody. They would choose the person, and they would brainstorm questions. They might either record the responses and later transcribe them, or write them down. ...
>
> To my pleasure, most of them chose to interview teachers in the ESPC. Through interviewing ESPC teachers, I thought I would know better about what students wanted to know about teachers. This was another benefit.

She then listed seven questions students asked the teachers and then reflected on the questions:

> Reflecting on students' questions I could see that:
> - My students were mostly concerned about teacher's personal freedom.
> Notice how many times the words "make them", "must" were used. ...

This was a turning point in her paper and her development in general. She formed her own theory of learner development, starting with pointing out the problem:

> I think our students suffer from kind of self imprisonment which leads to lack of creativity due to constraints at the family level, the educational system level, the curriculum level, and/or even the traditional class level.

Noor generated her theory through moral and ethical reflection, the highest level (see 3.4.2.4). Her perceived "solution" is embedded in her beliefs and values and her own experience as learner and teacher:

> To get the supreme creativity and inspiration you have to let the bird sing on a tree. It won't sing in a cage. When my students chose for themselves, I think their language could develop deeper and faster, although they still make grammatical mistakes which, I think, need a new cycle of action research.

Both the "solution" and future action plan are enlightening about the extent of her development. Continuity is basic in AR. Noor has grasped both the theory and its practice and creatively dealt with the constraints of her own situation. She has unconsciously fulfilled Elliott's (1991) vision of "creative resistance" in TAR (see 3.5.6.2). Noor's critical reflection emancipated her creativity, and this creativity emancipated herself and her students, too. Now she wanted to help her colleagues and their students through inspiration. Colleagues' positive responses to her presentation indicated her success in doing so. The Director praised her and told the other conference presenters that they should take Noor as their model in presenting at the Tunis conference. In the staffroom talk that followed her presentation, several teachers praised her paper, content and delivery. Ola, for one, described Noor as "a great teacher". She mentioned learning "a lot" from her presentation.

6.3.2.3 Classroom Innovation

What can we discover about the interrelationship between Noor's development and innovation in her own classroom? This section attempts to answer this research question.

The indications are that Noor has introduced the desired innovations into her classroom culture. First, she implemented team writing and ten of her 12 students worked on their projects in collaboration (in pairs). She mentioned this both in her presentations and research diary. "Students ... prefer to work collaboratively; out of 12 students only 2 will work individually," she wrote in her diary. Secondly, in the

process of her classroom research, Noor experimented with several of the new ideas discussed in our group meetings. For example, she applied "self-monitoring" and "peer reviews" (see 5.3.2 and 5.3.3), but not rigidly. She indicated in her research diary that transfer of these ideas to her classroom was not unproblematic and that she had to persist in training students to become autonomous:

> They wanted *me* [her emphasis] to correct their work. They think it's a waste of time to give them back their homework with only underlined mistakes. I wanted them to try and think of correcting the mistakes. ...

Thirdly, there is strong evidence to suggest that Noor has developed into an informed supervisor of project writing (cf. 6.3.1.1 and 6.3.1.2). She raised her students' awareness about the purpose of each task or activity she wanted them to do. This is a point emphasised in the peer reviews article (Mangelsdorf 1992) and in McNiff (1988). Noor transferred project ideas to her classroom pedagogy creatively, as can be seen in the following observation note of her teaching:

> The teacher distributed the homework (APP abstracts) and asked students writing together to sit side by side and try to correct their mistakes (underlined by the teacher). She asked: 'Why do I want you to correct yourself?' One student said he did not know. The teacher clarified her purpose: 'to learn to become autonomous ...'.

The fact that there is no best method of teaching and that the plausibility of the teacher's rationale is the most important was stressed in the CAWRP methodology (following McNiff 1988). This justification idea seems to have impressed Noor. As we have seen in sections 6.3.2.1 and 6.3.2.2, she applied it to herself and told colleagues in her progress presentation how she used the idea in her classroom teaching:

> Whenever I give them an activity, I ask them the question 'Why?'. 'I want you to give me articles. Why?' 'I want you to correct your own mistakes. Why?' But still, ... two or three of the students came to me and said: 'You say correct your mistakes ... we have many, many mistakes; we can't correct; we want *you* to correct. 'What about your colleagues?', I asked. If they still feel insecure, I sit with them and discuss their mistakes with them one by one. (recording)

The final sentence in this extract is significant. It shows the kind of relationship that exists between teacher development and classroom innovation. Unlike the case in the past (see 6.3.1.1 and 6.3.1.2), Noor now knows what she is doing and "why". Her application of new ideas in ways sensitive to her own classroom context and the individual needs of her students is indicative of the extent of her development and her effectiveness as a mediator of change (Widdowson 1993).

Undoubtedly, innovation in classroom pedagogy is hard to bring about without corresponding change in the teacher. One remarkable change in Noor was self-confidence. This was something she appeared to need in the baseline study (see 6.3.1.1). One illustrative example of the progress she has made in this regard comes from my conference diary:

> At about 2.45, Noor and I met outside Room 1. ... She told me that she was practising in her room and came in a hurry without her badge ... She seemed a bit nervous, so I expressed my confidence in her ability. ... When Roda [the speaker before Noor] finished, people started to move out and in. Prof. Ann Johns [a plenary speaker] was there and moved to leave. Noor stopped her: 'Aren't you going to attend my presentation?,' she asked. Ann apologised saying ... she was tired and needed to rest. She offered to take a copy of Noor's paper with her to the U.S. and promised to read it and send it back with comments ... Dr. Daoud, the Conference Chairman, attended Noor's presentation. Sadik and Ola were also there to encourage and support their colleague. She smiled happily as I took pictures of her. ... She looked calmer and more self-confident than she had been at the Centre. ... When I left for my presentation, I was sure of her success.

Noor's self-confidence and her motivation to improve further were clearer the next day, when she gave Ann Johns a copy of her paper to take home and send back with critical comments.

Now I move to describing and commenting on Sadik's development. Since Sadik carried out AR in collaboration with Ola (Table 6.1), one cannot write about him without involving Ola's voice. The main focus, however, is Sadik's development.

6.4 Sadik's Development

6.4.1 The Baseline

6.4.1.1 The "Story" of Leaning and Teaching Writing

Sadik's "story" of learning and teaching writing is a typical example of all the "stories" told by novice colleagues in the baseline interviews. Its main features are autonomous learning in response to context factors and "suffering" in teaching academic writing. He "learnt ...paragraph writing ... in the preparatory stage" not because it was required but because his teacher wanted to teach writing. He was a high achiever in English: "always got the highest mark, 50 out of 50". However, the situation was different at college. He met difficulties and had to take the initiative to meet his own needs:

> ... We had little practice ... I did badly in the first year, so in the second year, I said to myself I must work hard and write more, and actually I wrote 17 compositions in one term. I asked our seminar teacher to correct them for me. ...

Sadik's main area of interest is literature, and this seems to influence his beliefs about writing. The examination phobia has a role, too:

> I like writing poetry and short stories ... [and] hate rewriting. I write once only. If it is OK, it is OK. If not, I am not responsible (laughs).
> **Sada:** How can one like writing and hate rewriting?
> **Sadik:** ... because of the exam. In the exam, a student has no time to rewrite. There is nothing called draft and fair copy.

In the diploma year his writing improved because "We had to write a lot ... we were a few students and the teacher had ... time to train us".

Like those of other colleagues, Sadik's "story" of teaching academic writing implied suffering. The question "What does it mean to you to be a teacher of APP?" was challenging:

> **Sadik:** It is difficult to answer this question. I don't know what I should say.
> **Sada:** Please say whatever you feel or think; I'm not examining you. ...

Sadik: I must know what APP is. If I don't know, then I'm not an APP teacher at all. I must know these conventions. An APP teacher must know how to write an APP. If I don't know, then I'm not.

In saying so in the baseline, Sadik helped lay a foundation stone in the CAWRP design. The extent of the project's relevance and viability could not be more evident than in his answer to the next question:

Sada: How would you rate yourself as a teacher of academic writing?
Sadik: What do you mean?
Sada: This is self-evaluation, whatever you feel about yourself at present.
Sadik: [reflects] I don't think I am satisfied. I see my results in the students'.
Sada: How?
Sadik: I can't help them to get rid of this Arabic. ... I keep saying: 'Think in English and write in English. Throw Arabic in the sea. You don't need it now'.

In spite of this suffering, Sadik, unlike Noor (see 6.3.1.1), would "always select the APP with the Core given the choice". Teaching the APP meant status and confidence in the ability of the teacher, he indicated.

As we have seen in the above data extracts, students were Sadik's main concern. He wanted to help them, but was not clear about the "how". Two recent workshops on APP writing did not seem to have helped "much": "... it was like a theory. ... we must follow this step or that," he explained. His perception of a "solution" seemed disastrous (to me). In line with the majority of staff (see 2.5.2.1), he believed that "weak students must not be accepted at all ... because teaching them is a waste of time".

6.4.1.2 Awareness of Theory

Implicit in Sadik's story of teaching writing is the fact that he, like other colleagues, is not sufficiently aware of theory and practice in teaching/learning writing. Also, like them, he is confused about AR (see 2.5.2.2):

Sadik: We were asked to do action research.
Sada: What do you mean by 'action research'?
Sadik: Actual. I mean to do something actual, not literature.

Sada: What do you mean by 'actual'?
Sadik: I mean it is done ... taken from one's experience, not from books ...
Sada: Are you talking about teacher research or student research?
Sadik: Both. They told us in our meetings that 'we want action research'.

6.4.1.3 Beliefs about Collaboration

Like all the other teachers, Sadik expressed his belief in collaboration, rating it as "essential" in all contexts and at all levels. But he was not satisfied with the situation of collaboration at the Centre ("not even 40%"). The reason, in his view, was external, not internal: teachers' need to do other jobs to earn their living. This meant they had "little time to meet and collaborate". Like all the novices, he agreed with the statement: "The conditions available at the Centre at present are supportive of teacher team research". He believed in student collaboration, but not in "team writing". He was "completely against [it]". "It will never work," he said, because "students do not know how to collaborate" and their APPs "will be a disaster semantically and structurally" (see 2.5.2.3). Sadik discussed teaching problems with "some" colleagues but "never" "with students" because he believed this would reflect badly on the teacher.

6.4.2 The Research and Reporting Stage

6.4.2.1 Research and Pedagogy

In the data of the Research and Reporting Stage, there are many indications of Sadik's development in research and pedagogy. As we have seen in Table 6.1, his (and Ola's) AR topic is "Reading and peer-editing in EFL/ESP academic writing classes". This is how he described the study motivation in the progress report presentation:

> The idea of peer editing and the subsequent motivation to do action research in this area came after reading Mangelsdorf's article on 'peer reviews' and after Ola and I carried out a pilot study in our Prof classes last trimester. We wanted to investigate the subject further in our medical groups, who are more advanced than the Prof.. As I said, peer editing is essential in collaborative writing, and the majority of our students agreed to write [their APPs] in collaboration. This motivated us to try peer editing again ...

This quotation suggests a number of points. First, it reveals that Sadik and Ola's AR idea did not originate in a classroom problem ; it was motivated by their reading, critical evaluation, and piloting of "peer reviews" (see 5.3.2). Secondly, it shows awareness of research conventions. The motivation for the study is clearly expressed and well articulated. Thirdly, it implies that the two teachers have embraced the idea of team writing, motivated by their students' positive response to it. This is a significant departure from Sadik's earlier belief about team writing (cf. 6.4.1.3). Moreover, the fact that they have decided to carry out research and write it up in collaboration, going through the same process their students are going through, indicates the importance of their research in showing the relationship between teacher and student development.

Table 6.3 on the next page presents a condensed description of Sadik and Ola's first research report, based on the recording of their progress presentation. As can be seen, the procedure they followed was a series of actions and decisions implemented over several classroom sessions in the process of integrating research and pedagogy. Most of the insights they relied on came from the "peer reviews" research article which they had already piloted and presented to the group. However, they improvised and adapted ideas and procedures in accordance with local needs and variables.

There are several indications in the report of the two young teachers' development in research and pedagogy. The first is their awareness that students' level in both reading and writing should be investigated before intervention. This shows that they were clear about the nature and aim of their research. Secondly, their concern over unifying the process and procedure of peer editing and training the students in using editing symbols indicates a growing research maturity. Thirdly, their investigation of students' perceptions and expectations before and after intervention shows understanding of both ESP and AR. Sadik explained:

> Questionnaires 1 & 2 were mainly about what ... the students think of reading, writing, peer editing, and collaboration *before* encountering these things. We wanted to compare these responses with those *after* the process [for which questionnaire 3 was used]. ... In questionnaires 1 and 2 we asked them to write suggestions of what they would like to receive from their classmates. And after the process, we asked them what kind of suggestions they had received.

Table 6.3 Sadik and Ola's First AR Report

Actions and Decisions	Tools and Procedures
• Determined students' level in English	• Placement test used at the ESPC
• Tested students' ability to read.	• Reading a text with 'nonsense" words
• Tested students' ability to write.	• Writing a paragraph on a general topic
• Unified the editing process. • Trained students to use editing symbols. • Trained students to apply peer editing in pairs.	• A model of editing symbols from a resource book • Writing paragraphs on general topics
• Investigated students' expectations and response (perception vs. action).	• Questionnaire 1 & 2 (pre-application) • Questionnaire 3 (post-application)
• Introduced APP writing holistically, focusing on layout, content and organisation. • Drew students' attention to the process of writing. • Introduced "collaborative writing" and pairs agreed on. • Asked students to write their APP introductions without prior reading of model introductions. • Gave students authentic model introductions to read and analyse then rewrite their introductions. • Asked students to apply peer editing in pairs. • Monitored students' edited introductions and response and gave feedback.	• Observation and reflection • Students' edited drafts • teacher feedback comments • Questionnaire 3, to investigate students' response/reaction
• Identified errors: Sadik combined classes in Ola's absence and asked the students to rewrite their introductions in a crowded atmosphere; the step was repeated.	• Observation and reflection
• Decided to investigate teacher role as well.	• Observation and reflection

Another important aspect of Sadik and Ola's development in research techniques is the use of "why" and "how" questions. They asked their students to justify their response and reactions to each statement. Sadik read examples for his audience:

> 'I think my second writing was good/bad.' 'Why?'; 'Reading before writing helped me improve my writing.'. 'How?' ...

Moreover, a significant, indication of their development at this stage is their error identification and subsequent action. This shows the extent the CAWRP has succeeded in providing its participants with an environment in which openness, tolerance of error, and sacrifices in self-esteem became acceptable. Sadik is no longer fearful of discussing problems with colleagues, even students (cf. 6.4.1.3). This is something he has gained from the CAWRP rather than the research article. Group learning has been shown as effective in providing teachers with a sense of security (see 3.5.5.3). Besides, application of the "Practise what you preach" maxim has helped to lessen colleagues' fear of others' evaluation to a good extent (see 5.4.4).

6.4.2.2 Reflection and Reflexivity

In Chapter Five, there are several examples of Sadik's reflective and reflexive comments (see, e.g., 5.3.2 and 5.5.1.2). Reflection and reflexivity seemed to be two of his innate characteristics that just needed to be nourished and sustained. This required an atmosphere of sharing and caring, as the following examples illustrate.

The first example comes from the transcripts of his (and Ola's) progress presentation. After reading a big number of students' responses and reactions to the statements in the pre- and post-intervention questionnaires (see Table 6.3), Sadik expressed his great surprise at students' well-reasoned justifications:

> What is surprising is that they know these facts. I mean I could never imagine that our students are able to give such answers....

Again, he read one student comment to illustrate; then he reflected on it aloud:

> 'I think all of us must read as much as possible ... writing needs more than information; it needs vocabulary, grammar, skill and experience'. Who could think that students know all this?

He added in a reflexive tone:

> Always we speak about needs, needs, needs and say students don't know their needs ... We are under-estimating them. We are under-estimating them [repeated in original].

In this case, Sadik was speaking about medical students. I could identify with his findings because they matched my experience and previous research findings about those students (see Daoud 1994b) and also students' beliefs about themselves (see 2.5.1.3). However, colleagues who had little experience of teaching the Med course seemed to have found Sadik's claims exaggerated:

> **Sadik:** Our students are *not* weak at reading. ... if we go back to marking, we gave ... less importance to writing and said that our objective in the Centre [was] to teach students how to read. Not any more: we need to reduce the importance of reading.
> **Hind:** The objective is that they read; they need to read more than to write. That's the objective of our courses.
> **Sadik:** There is no need to teach them how to read because they know how to read. ... I can show you. ...

This diversity in "knowledge of the world" seemed to have created some tension or misunderstanding in some of our group meetings, often as a result of lack of ability to go beyond our "horizon" (Webb 1996a: 44) by imagining (see Grundy 1996). In the above extract, Hind does not seem to identify with Sadik's finding because her teaching experience is limited to the Humanities course and could be unaware that students and courses differ, sometimes considerably.

A third example of Sadik's reflective and reflexive ability relates to the same claim about medical students' reading ability. The Director joined the group shortly before the end of Sadik's (and Ola's) presentation, while he was still speaking:

> **Sadik:** I just want to draw your attention to the finding that they [students] saw grammar as their first weak point. Writing ... came next ..., and *reading was number 3* [added emphasis].

Discussion time was dominated by an argument raised by the Director in relation to Sadik's last point. She challenged this finding in a rather unexpected manner:

> **Director:** Sorry I came late; I had other things to do. You said ... they don't need reading. ... This is a big assumption. ... What is your definition of reading?
> **Sadik:** Reading is a psycholinguistic process ... [interrupted].
> **Director:** What I am asking is: What do you understand from the term "reading" *in our context*? When we say in our objectives we want to teach our students how to read, what is *our* definition of reading?
> **Sadik:** [in a low voice] Reading is understanding. This is what I think.
> **Director:** No, not what *you* think; what *we* think, what the *Centre* thinks, what he *objectives* think. ... I think in the depth, we have all agreed on the enabling skills.

At this stage, Noor came in gently:

> **Noor:** I think his focus is not whether they are good readers or not. It is just ... a by-product finding.
> **Sadik:** Yeah, yeah. It is ... a by-product.
> **Director:** I see.

Noor's reflection-in-action (see 3.4.2.4) and subsequent intervention helped and might have saved the young teachers' learning journey. That minute I was wondering how they would respond. It was not the argument over the reliability of a questionnaire finding as much as the tone and manner in which the discussion was conducted that worried me most. I seemed to have forgotten about the empowering effect of classroom research and collegiality. Collaboration seemed to have created an intimate bond and a good deal of mutual trust among the teacher-researchers because they were often working together, discussing, and exchanging benefits and advice (see 5.5.1). My worry relaxed when Ola came in and supported Sadik, encouraged by Noor's intervention. She made an effort to reassure the Director that she and Sadik were well-informed about research methodology and that they would live up to her expectations: they would not rely on questionnaires only:

> **Ola:** That's why ... at the end we are going to compare the actual comments they wrote on each other's papers with their own writing .... We are going to compare. We are not going to rely on questionnaires only for our final decision.

It is clear in the data presented in this section that reflection and reflexivity are powerful, not only as mediators of change and development, but also as means of managing their complexities. However, reflection and reflexivity are themselves constrained by the amount of time available for teachers to pause and think constructively (see 3.3.2; 3.4.2.5 and 3.5.6.2). The Director, with her 20 hours of work a day at and out of the Centre seemed to have left herself little space for critical reflection. This seems to impact negatively on her teachers' growth and development. That argument over Sadik and Ola's questionnaire finding, for example, consumed all the discussion time devoted to their presentation. They were unable to get direct formative feedback from their peers in the manner Noor had done (see 6.3.2.1). In their open-ended feedback on that meeting, the teacher-researchers implicitly expressed mixed feelings. They were happy to learn together and gain experience and disappointed about lack of appreciation and encouragement (see Jihad's comment in 8.3.7). Sadik, for example, wrote:

> I was really happy with all of us - those doing research/interested - attending the meeting. I felt I didn't need others, though really I needed them because in this Centre we have been learning to be together, to be one family. I don't know how much true it is now.

He added in the open-ended section of the questionnaire:

> This is the first time tutors feel that we are doing something productive. ... We have touched crucial areas in writing and teaching writing. ... The quality of colleagues' responses, the implied rather than the clear, show that they were interested though they lacked motivation. ... because of the stress and pressure ... imposed on them. It was not money what they needed; it was something else.

Sadik then wrote one and a half lines and then crossed them out in a way that no one would be able to recognize his message. He commented in the margin: "I am sorry I crossed it out ... I really can't keep it - it is very offensive". This thoughtful remark of his and the act of crossing out what he believed might harm relationships at the Centre are illustrative of the power of teacher reflection and reflexivity, if given space and time

to flourish and expand in a non-threatening environment.

Reflection and reflexivity generated feelings of empathy and solidarity on the part of Sadik . This was evident in what he did at the regional conference. As I have mentioned before (6.2), Shehab, our colleague, who was also Sadik and Ola's teacher at the undergraduate level, was unable to get an entry visa in time to travel to Tunisia and give his presentation, and Sadik stood in for him. It was a moment of reflection in which conference participants who came to listen to Shehab's paper shared:

> Sadik came smiling as often. He had two badges, his and Shehab's. ... He explained to the audience why he was wearing two badges without going into great details, hoping , it seems, that they would get the message ... ... He finished in time and answered questions, referring to Shehab as 'my teacher' and 'the experienced teacher'. ... The audience were impressed. ... They clapped for Shehab and Sadik. ... His sense of responsibility ... made him perform even better than he had done in his own presentation. Conference Diary.

6.4.2.3 Classroom Innovation

What can we discover about the interrelationship between Sadik's development and his classroom innovation?

It is hard to reflect back on Sadik's and Ola's involvement in the CAWRP without remembering vividly the "revolution" they introduced into their classrooms. Most of the activities they carried out right from their "pilot study" to their conference paper in Tunis were descriptions of how they introduced innovation into their teaching of academic writing. Like Noor, Sadik and Ola encouraged their medical students to work collaboratively on their APPs, and the vast majority of their students opted for team writing. This, as they mentioned in their progress presentations, had encouraged them to carry out research on peer editing. They saw peer editing as an essential part of collaborative writing, and the two innovations went on hand in hand in their classes. This created a real change in their classroom culture.

Both Sadik and Ola invited me to observe their application of peer editing and provide them with feedback. Almost the same phenomena were observed in both classes. In contrast to some other classrooms I observed during the same period, student attendance rate was exceptionally high in theirs. Nineteen out of 20 were

present in Ola's class and 16 out of 18 in Sadik's. I attached great meaning to this attendance, the time being just before the mid-term holiday and the feast marking the end of Ramadan. Normally, attendance becomes loose at such times. Indeed, the same day I observed Sadik's and Ola's classes, a whole group in another course did not turn up; the students agreed amongst themselves to have a break three days before the holiday officially started.

Other classroom phenomena observed were indicative of both students' and teachers' response to the innovations. In Sadik's class,

> The teacher was busy talking to a group of four students. I was not sure of the topic of discussion. One student in another group on the other side of the room called: 'Sir, Sir', but the teacher didn't hear him. The student then commented in Arabic: 'He is busy; let's go on now. We'll ask him later'.

This is not a typical class at the ESPC, but it is the one that Sadik and his generated belief in team writing and peer editing have created. Students' activity was highest when the teacher asked the writers and editors (two pairs in each case) to move and sit together in order to discuss the outcome of their peer editing:

> ... The class was buzzing with activity. Students freely moved in the room to sit beside their peer-editors/writers. Some were smiling. A student called for another, apparently the writer, to come and sit beside him. My feeling was that they had forgotten all about the presence of an observer in the class. (classroom observation note)

In the post-observation meeting, I asked Sadik about his role in the peer editing session, and what the focus of his discussion with the groups was. He said he acted mostly as an "arbitrator", trying to deal with "disagreements". Commenting on the use of Arabic in student discussion (one of my observations), he said: 'I keep reminding them to use English, but I don't stop them. I know they use Arabic. If it helps them to reach a solution, I don't mind". This marked a departure from a stance he had expressed in the baseline interview. He was adamant against L1 use in the classroom then (see 6.4.1.1). Like Noor, Sadik has indeed developed into a flexible ESP teacher

(see Robinson 1991: 96 and 3.2.3).

This change on the classroom level would not have come about without a corresponding change in the teacher/innovator. Sadik and Ola's research of peer editing has launched their creativity and contributed a good deal to their development. One achievement in Sadik's words was the ability to reflect in action and on action (see 3.4.2.4):

> Now in the class I observe things and write them down. I keep all the time reflecting on how to improve teaching. I observe the students ... look at their eyes ... even if someone is moving his leg under the table. ... You can see how students are reacting. ... (post-classroom observation note)

It is clear how sensitive he is to classroom phenomena. This ability in him cannot be claimed to have been created by the CAWRP, but it was nourished, encouraged, and sustained by the collegial environment with which the CAWRP was able to provide its participants (see 3.3. and 3.5).

In their conference presentation at the regional conference, Sadik and Ola provided their audience with tangible evidence of their students' response to the innovation: student-edited texts supported by several examples of students' comments on the advantages and disadvantages of peer editing and collaborative writing. In their paper, the product, they quoted Mangelsdorf's study (1992) and mentioned that theirs was an extension of it. They referred to Raimes's (1983b) and other writers and visualised the reading-writing-peer editing relationship as a triangle with reading and writing as the two vertical axes and peer editing as the third axis that bridges the gap between them:

> This view helps us to widen the scope through which we look at reading and writing and realise that the gap is uneasy to bridge. However, it allows us to add a third axis to the set, peer editing ...

Their personal theorising about "peer editing in EFL/ESP classes" is illuminative of the power of TAR and experiential learning. It shows how clearly they

have conceptualised the relationship between reading, writing, peer editing , and student awareness of what they have learned (see Brown 1990):

> Editing, whether it is the teacher's or classmate's, connects writing with reading in how much students learn from reading and how much they are aware of what they have learned. Therefore, writing can be seen as a process of re-reading before it is a process of re-writing, as Mangelsdorf's states when she says that 'with enough practice we'll be able to be critics of our own papers (1992: 279)'.
> (Sadik and Ola's conference paper)

The influence of the project on Sadik (and Ola) is clear. In both the summative feedback questionnaire and follow-up interview, he mentioned in explicit ways that the CAWRP had transformed his vision of writing and teaching/learning writing. Sadik's critical evaluation of the progress reports meeting indicates his own feeling of the extent of his learning from his colleagues' research, discussion, and feedback:

> The... researchers tried to tell frankly what they had been doing, even when they might have been doing something wrong or incomplete in one of the stages. Alas! Only those concerned with the research attended the meeting ... where were the others? ... What we learned is what they missed.

His regrets are indicative of the power of collaborative TAR in promoting not only teacher development but also collegiality, genuine collaboration, and caring for the other.

6.5 A Comparative Analysis of Noor's and Sadik's Development

This section presents both a summary and a contrastive analysis of Noor's and Sadik's development, focusing on the research and Reporting Stage, particularly the gains they have made through their undertaking TAR.

It is clear from the report in this chapter that, in spite of the huge gap between their experience in teaching English, both Noor and Sadik have started from the same level of awareness as far as approaches to teaching academic writing and carrying out AR are concerned. However, Sadik, unlike Noor, expressed beliefs and attitudes that seemed harmful to writing pedagogy, presumably because of lack of teaching

experience (see 6.4.1). Noor, on the other hand, did not have the attitudinal problems Sadik had and seemed to possess and believe in most, if not all, the values and principles that have motivated this project, freedom and responsibility in particular. Her only attitudinal problem was lack of self-confidence in teaching project writing. Her active involvement in the project and her intrinsic motivation to improve have contributed considerably to changing her view of herself and consequently to her personal and professional development.

These two teachers' acquaintance with the necessary theoretical and practical insights through AR and experiential learning appears to have helped them develop unexpectedly quickly, supported by the non-threatening environment with which the project principles and methodology have provided them. Additionally, their innate abilities to reflect deeply and their tendency to evaluate their performance explicitly or implicitly and to look at themselves through the mirrors (their colleagues' evaluation) have aided their development to a significant extent. More evidence of their learning, among other colleagues, has been presented in Chapter Five, and more will appear in Chapter Seven, which is based on the summative evaluation and follow-up data.

Tables 6.4 and 6.5 on the next two pages summarise the different indications of Noor's and Sadik's development, as presented in this chapter, focusing on two areas (a) research and pedagogy and (b) reflection and reflexivity. The two tables show that both Noor and Sadik have made substantial progress in the Research and Reporting Stage in comparison with their entry points (6.3.1 and 6.4.1). It is clear that they have achieved almost the same progress in relation to awareness of writing pedagogy and understanding of the aims and methodology of AR. Sadik made additional gains in reconstructing his beliefs about writing in areas Noor, as a result of her long experience, was more aware of (e.g., students' individual needs and the socio-economic factors that impinge on the classroom). As we have seen in Chapter Five and in this chapter, Sadik has been able to overcome his attitudinal problems gradually through reading, discussion, and interaction with Ola, his research partner, and also the group as a whole. What is remarkable about Noor's and Sadik's development is that both of them touched on moral and ethical issues in their reflections. This finding is

consistent with Elliott's argument that novice teachers are capable of reflecting across the three levels of reflection (see 3.4.2.4) in no less effective manner, given the right conditions (see Elliott 1989, 1993b, c, d, & e).

Sadik's tendency to take risks more than Noor and other colleagues became less evident in the Research and Reporting Stage (see 5.4.4; 5.5.1.2; cf. 6.4.2.2). This can be interpreted with reference to his increasing context awareness and social maturity as a result of his AR and collaboration with Ola and others. In other words, he no longer took things for granted, and like Noor, developed an understanding of the gulf between rhetoric and reality. In effect, he became more cautious and tactful in attempting to bridge the gaps (see 7.2.5, for example).

Table 6.4 Indications of Noor's Development

Teacher	Research and Pedagogy	Reflection and Reflexivity
Noor	• Adapted an AR cycle from Richard's and Lockhart (1994) and expanded it in the write-up stage. • Showed evidence of McNiff's (1988) influence. • Started with investigating students' needs and wants. • Involved students actively in her research and asked them to select authentic research articles for classroom study. • Encouraged students to team-write and use self-monitoring, explaining her purpose: learner autonomy. • Was sensitive to the needs of student resistors, showing empathy and understanding of their needs. • Sought feedback from peers on her research approach and methodology and showed acceptance of their challenging questions. • Showed concrete evidence of reading by supporting her claims with references to the literature. • Provided evidence of students' progress in writing and of changes in her and their attitude to writing. • Was supportive to colleagues and appreciative of their support to her. • Showed indications of self-confidence, self-esteem, and self-determination. • Theorised on learner autonomy. • Indicated her future action plan.	• Started with technical and practical reflection, focusing on procedures and ideas. • Focused on the 'why' questions. • Expressed implicit reflexivity. • Read critically and selectively. • Was tactful, thoughtful, and sensitive to context factors. • Theorised on learner autonomy relying on the highest level of ethical reflection.

Table 6.5 Indications of Sadik's Development

Teacher	Research and Pedagogy	Reflection and Reflexivity
Sadik	• Showed awareness of research conventions (e.g., study motivation) and methodology. • Started with investigating students' levels, needs, and expectations. • Trained students in "peer editing" and shared with them the purpose of the innovation. • Encouraged students to write their APPs collaboratively, and the majority responded positively. • Used authentic research articles for classroom study. • Investigated students' responses to peer editing before and after they tried it. • Sought critical feedback from peers and showed tolerance of their critical evaluation. • Supported research claims with reference to the literature, showing evidence of reading. • Provided evidence of students' progress in both peer editing and writing. • Expressed appreciation of colleagues' critical feedback. • Showed indications of self-confidence in admitting. errors made in the research process. • Conceptualised the value of peer editing in the process of teaching reading and writing. • Indicated that his AR was ongoing in order to deal with problems that arose in the process of implementing peer editing and team writing.	• Used a combination of technical, practical and moral reflection. • Focused on the 'why' and "how" questions. • Expressed explicit self-evaluation and implicit evaluation of the other. • Was sensitive to context factors. • Theorised about the value of peer editing in the classes it was tried in, pointing out its advantages and disadvantages for both students and teacher.

6.6 Summary

The focus of this chapter is the Research and Reporting Stage. It starts with some basic information showing both the resources and constraints on TAR in this stage. The two detailed case studies of Noor and Sadik do not show significant differences between the two teacher-researchers in spite of the gap in teaching experience. This has been explained by reference to their shared basic needs before intervention. The main difference was that Sadik had more attitudinal problems than Noor did, initially, in view of his being a novice teacher. The evidence presented suggests that he has been able to challenge his own beliefs empowered by knowledge of theory, practice, and the

work context and its people, through his and colleagues' TAR. It has been shown that both teachers continued to grow and expand their awareness, building on what was achieved in the Orientation Stage. Both have gained in self-confidence and self-esteem, and both have come up with tentative theories as to how to deal with problems or challenges that faced them and their students in teaching/learning academic writing. Their emphasis on training students to become autonomous learners is clear.

One striking similarity between the two teachers is the development in their reflective and reflexive powers. It is this mediating device, reflection, that has transformed their knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes. Both have introduced the desired innovations in their classrooms as a result of a generated belief in the value of the ideas they tested and evaluated systematically in their practice. The methods they used to give their students more control over their learning are to a large extent similar to the methods employed in the CAWRP for TD. Transferability from the second- to the first-order AR is clear.

The next chapter focuses on the teachers' summative reflection on and evaluation of their learning journey. It throws more light on their development, both as a group and as individuals, from their own perspectives.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Summative Feedback and Follow-up Stage

7.1 Introduction

This chapter answers the two research question that relate to the Summative Feedback and Follow-up Stage of the teacher development (TD) project (see 1.6.2 and 1.7):

- Has teacher-initiated action research (TAR) proved to be an effective and viable approach to TD at the ESPC in the participants' view? What are their justifications?
- What has happened to TAR and team writing, the pedagogic innovation, since fieldwork ended?

Feedback data come from three main sources: a) the Summative Feedback Questionnaire (Appendix 4.6); b) follow-up interviews with five full participants (Appendix 4.9), and c) the last two recorded office meetings/interviews with the Centre Director (22 and 30 January 1997). Evidence related to the follow-up period comes from formal and informal communication with the Centre administration and teachers, follow-up feedback questionnaires (Appendix 4.8), and Centre documents. It should be noted here that I was unable to carry out more follow-up interviews because of project arrest. Such interviews were desirable in view of the fact that all the Centre staff were involved in the project directly through participation or indirectly by receiving copies of project materials, reports, announcements, etc.

7.2 Summative Feedback

Summative feedback on the CAWRP was developmental in purpose. This is explicitly stated in the questionnaire rubric:

> ... we need to reflect and objectively evaluate the project. ... The aim of this questionnaire is to find out about your views regarding the project in general. Our objective evaluation will help us suggest some practical recommendations.

Ten out of the 13 teachers who attended the last meeting returned the Summative Feedback Questionnaire (see 4.5.2 for definitions of terms):

- seven *full participants* (Jihad, Noor, Shehab, Sadik, Ola, Reem, and Abeer);
- two *moderate participants* (Salma, Hind); and
- one *occasional participant* (Shaza).

Three occasional participants did not return the questionnaire for reasons unclear to me, as I did not have the chance to investigate this issue because of project arrest and the ending of my teaching at the same time.

Perspectives are presented and discussed under the following headings:

- Writing and teaching/learning writing
- Action research
- Classroom innovation
- Constraints on the CAWRP
- The self and the other
- Success/failure of the CAWRP
- Continuity

7.2.1 Writing and Teaching/Learning Writing

One main aim of the project was to raise participants' awareness of the nature of writing and the methodology of teaching/learning academic writing. In answer to two questions in the feedback questionnaire, a majority (6 and 7 out of 10, respectively) indicated that the CAWRP increased their awareness of the nature of writing and writing methodology to a "very large" or "large" extent. Three selected "small" or "very small" extent. Their justifications are in Box 7.1.

Box 7.1 Awareness of writing and writing methodology

Full Participants

- [large extent] It encouraged me to look for and read anything written on collaborative writing and peer editing (Jihad].
- [large] Not before I began writing the abstract of our research did I realize the nature of writing: writing is rewriting ... (Sadik).
- [small extent] I did not write up till now; my partner wrote the first part of our research. I'll write the next part and I may comment later on (Reem).
- (very large) I am a novice teacher and I had only some ideas about the writing methodology. This project has ... enriched my knowledge very much and has made me feel as if I have 20 years of experience in teaching (Abeer).

Moderate and Occasional Participants

- [large] It helped with regard to ... some problems ... such as plagiarism (Salma).
- [small] because I didn't shared [sic] in the action research. (Hind).
- [very small] I didn't take part so much in the project (Shaza).

Several points are worth noting here. First, the participants seem to agree that the project has met their needs in relation to awareness of the nature of writing and writing methodology to the extent of their own participation in it. Abeer's comment might sound exaggerated if not compared with her answers in the interview and elsewhere in the questionnaire:

> Writing is a painful process. ... The product is a new born baby. The mother suffers a lot before having this baby. ... But when she sees the baby ... she forgets the pain. This is writing. (interview)

> ... for the first time in my life I know about hedges. ... Believe me, I myself know now how to write an APP better than before (questionnaire).

Secondly, one can sense the extent the CAWRP has succeeded in lowering its participants' affective filter and their initial fear of evaluation (cf. Pennington 1996a) . Reem's answer illustrates this aspect. She admits that she has not written up till now and, therefore, cannot claim that she has become aware of the nature of writing. Similarly, Shaza and Hind confess that little change has taken place in their awareness for the same reason. Thirdly, one noticeable achievement of the CAWRP is the transformation that has taken place in Sadik's beliefs and awareness in relation to (a) writing (cf. 6.4.1.1) and teaching/learning writing (see p. 61); and (b) his willingness to discuss problems with his students (cf. 6.4.1.3. In the interview, he was more elaborate and mentioned the effect of the change in him on the learners:

> Before I went to Tunisia I asked my students to rewrite their APP sections, and they complained. ... So I showed them how many times I wrote the abstract: one, two, three, 19, 26 ... drafts. "Look, this is the first draft; look how horrible it is. ... I am a teacher and I wrote all this". ... One student said: 'Sir, since you wrote it 26 times, if we write it 50 times, it is not ... much'.

Moreover, five full participants achieved the goal of writing a conference paper. This is an important achievement in the context of this study in view of the time constraint (see 2.5.2.1). The act of writing, process and product, contributed productively to the writers' development. Because the Third Maghreb Conference theme was "Reading/Writing Convergences", participation in it consolidated what had already been learnt in the Orientation Stage and through TAR and writing up. The teachers who participated in the conference came back empowered and more motivated and self-confident. This was evident in their answers to interview questions that aimed at probing the extent of their development as a result of these influences. In the case of Noor, for example, going through the process of research and writing hand in hand with her students has helped her become aware of the process and product of writing (cf. 6.3.1.2):

Sada: How would you describe the **process** of writing depending on your experience of it in the CAWRP?
Noor: It is very difficult. I wrote my paper five, six, ten times, I think. It is not easy, but it is interesting.
Sada: How would you describe the **product** of writing?
Noor: It is like giving birth to a baby [we laugh together] -- very nice and very difficult.

As a result of this awareness, Noor has become more enlightened about teaching writing:

Sada: In your experience of writing, what should we focus on in teaching the APP: the process or product?
Noor: Both. ...
Sada: Why both?
Noor: Because our students need to know how to develop their ideas ... how to begin, how to be persuasive and then how to give a good result at the end - the fruit of this process.

In answer to another question, she pointed out that the CAWRP helped in raising her awareness and that of her students about the importance of writing in language learning:

I did not know how much writing is important for the learner before. You see, I used to give my students homework, just something to be done. But now I think writing is very important, and my students, after writing many, many times during the course, felt the importance of writing; they liked it. It has improved their other skills. Now I have come to believe more in writing.

Clearly, Noor is no longer inhibited about teaching academic writing (cf. 6.3.1.1). Her raised awareness has made her task easier and more interesting, too.

Similarly, Ola, the novice, is now more aware about the nature of writing and the process-product relationship:

The process of writing is creating an image, and changing it into words. The process takes more time. ... we should spend more time on the process.... If you teach the process well, you'll have a good product.

The Director had a different view of the project's effect. She gave the CAWRP little or no credit. Asked what she felt about the acceptance of all the abstracts we sent to the 3rd Maghreb Conference, she said: "It was not the project

that made them write"; it was because "they were ready and willing" to do so.

It may be the case that involvement in Centre inservice activities had, to an extent, prepared the ground for these teachers, but given the contextual factors discussed in Chapters One and Two, it is improbable that they would have achieved so much without the specific motivation of the CAWRP, particularly the collaborative ethos it generated.

7.2.2 Action Research

The project could also be deemed as influential in overcoming cognitive and affective barriers in teacher attitude to AR (see 2.5.2.2; 6.3.1.2; 6.4.1.2). Seven respondents (out of 10) indicated that the CAWRP "has increased" their knowledge of research methodology" to a "very large" or "large" extent (see Box 7.2).

Box 7.2 Awareness of action research methodology

Full Participants

- [to a very large extent] My participation in the CAWRP activities obliged me to read many references which really increased my knowledge and gave me better insights about classroom research (Noor).
- [very large] I can't resist the temptation of action research in spite of my teaching overload (Jihad).
- [very large] It was the first time I go through such a process, and everything I learned was completely new (Sadik).
- [very large] I almost knew nothing about classroom research methods before I participated in this project (Ola).
- [very large] I had the honour to work with you. I did not know before how to have a research, but through your experience I ... knew the steps of action research. (Reem).
- [very large] I had no idea before about classroom methodology. ... action research has opened my eyes to an effective tool of teaching which I can continue doing in the future (Abeer).

Moderate and Occasional Participants

- [moderate extent] I have not yet participated in classroom research (Salma].
- [very small extent] I didn't do action research (Hind).
- [large] I shared the view points of experienced teachers (Shaza).

The target short-term aim of the CAWRP was to motivate its participants to carry out AR through empowering them with knowledge about this methodology. The long-term aim was CPD (continuous professional development). Feedback from the participants (Box 7.2) indicates the value of collaborative TAR for TD.

Changing teachers' attitudes to AR is another area in which the project has made a useful contribution. The majority of its evaluators believed that the CAWRP was influential in changing their attitude to AR. One teacher believed the opposite: the project impacted negatively on her attitude to AR "to a great extent" (see Box 7.3).

Box 7.3 Changes in teachers' attitude to action research

Full Participants

- [great] I found out that research is not a very complicated thing and not very much time consuming (Jihad).
- [great] I always thought that research is a big deal and it is not for me. When I am more experienced ... and ... aged, I may be able to do research; this was completely reviewed. ... Every teacher can carry out research (Sadik).
- [great] ... this is the first time I do a research. The project has encouraged me ... (Ola).
- [some extent] I found it very interesting, especially working with you as an experienced researcher ... (Reem).
- [great] [Research] was a foreign world for me. I thought that only experienced teachers can dare to make a research. I know now that this is not true (Abeer).

Moderate and Occasional Participants

- [some extent] I wish I had the time to do research (Shaza).
- [great] I always thought of our context as being different from western's [sic]. so, I believe we need to think carefully ... about what is more appropriate than another especially in research techniques (Hind).

The data presented in Box 7.3 provide evidence that the main aim of the CAWRP has been largely achieved. First, it provided both experienced and novice teachers with information about AR, which they clearly needed. The Director thought that they did not:

> They already know a lot about AR ... long before your project ... Webber distributed a handout explaining what AR was. That was, I think, 2-3 years ago. Then some time ago, we asked the teachers to start AR. So they don't need any encouragement because we have already introduced this aspect of research

> to them ... Encouraging research projects is one of the vital areas of the Centre's work (office meeting: 22 January).

It may simply be the case that the teachers needed more 'hands on' experience of AR within an ethos in which they could both provide and receive support from their colleagues. When contextual factors that impact on their development are substantial, the kind of support structures provided by the CAWRP may be vital in getting teachers going.

Secondly, McNiff's book (1988), which inspired me in the first place to try AR in our context, seems to have similarly inspired my colleagues. This can be seen in what the AR workshop leaders (Noor and Jihad) have said (Boxes 7.2 and 7.3). Their positive response was unexpected because of overload and other contextual factors, as Jihad indicates (Box 7.2). But knowledge is empowering (Stenhouse 1975). When teachers became aware of the aims and methodology of AR, they modified their attitude or changed it. This was clearer in their interview responses. Asked to define AR, Abeer, the youngest, said:

> Action research is a cure. It is a solution for a problem. You see, I want to do something in my class to make it better, to help my students. So action research helps me to achieve these things. Action research is not words. It is action.

Thirdly, teacher collaboration in general, and the participant role of the colleague facilitator/researcher in particular, seems to be another significant motivating factor for carrying out AR. Reem, for example, twice mentions the influence on her to carry out AR (Boxes 7.2 and 7.3). She was very reluctant to do so initially, but my offer to work with her on a joint project on a topic of her choice modified her attitude. This had an additional and no less significant reward for both of us. Our collaborative AR resulted in friendship and confidence (see 8.5a & d).

Moreover, one can sense the extent the teacher-researchers felt empowered by their AR personally and professionally. Noor, for example, wrote in the questionnaire: "After ... participating in the project 'research' has become part of my mind not only in classroom, but also in personal affairs" (see also 8.3.1).

However, not all the staff were positive. Hind, who recommends AR for

TD in her MA dissertation, considered AR, the CAWRP way, alien to the local culture (Box 7.3). She believed that "pushing" for change was intimidating and out of tune with a researcher's role. Her view can be interpreted in the light of her disbelief in the value of extrinsic motivation (see 2.5.2.2). The same applies to the Director, who used AR for her PhD study (see 5.2.2.1). It seems that those colleagues, being experienced researchers, saw AR from a perspective different from that of the novice researchers, who appear to be highly receptive. Perhaps the incoming new AR ideas were threatening to the experienced researchers' knowledge and self-esteem (see 3.3.2). Another possible explanation is that the researcher was very persistent in trying to involve the experienced researchers, erroneously believing that their involvement would motivate the novices. Gender might have a role, too. The reason I am saying so is that the two male experienced researchers, Nidal and Shehab, were receptive to the project and both contributed to productively (see 5.2.1.1; 5.2.2.4; 7.2.7).

The lesson interventionist researchers can learn from this analysis and interpretation is that "pushing" has advantages and disadvantages and that it is less likely to succeed with experienced researchers. Participants' beliefs, education, position, gender, disposition, and other individual differences should be taken into consideration, in the light of this project experience, in order to generate participants' positive attitudes and maximise their potential for development. These I seem to have failed to pay sufficient attention to in the case of the Director and her Evaluation Coordinator.

7.2.3 Classroom Innovation

One aim of the CAWRP was to motivate and support the introduction of changes in APP pedagogy through awareness-raising and TAR (see 5.3). Team writing was a priority (see 1.5), with peer reviews, self-monitoring, and progress presentations as complementary activities for its success.

Evaluation of the implementation of these innovations was carried out through participant and classroom observations in the final weeks of Stage Two as well as through the summative feedback questionnaire and follow-up interviews.

As I have shown in Chapters Five and Six, the innovations were positively received by the majority of teachers (see 5.3; 5.4.3; 6.3.2.3; 6.4.2.3), and many teachers in different courses reported implementing or trying them, especially in the Med course for which team writing was recommended (Daoud 1995b). Teachers who carried out AR were the most enthusiastic to team writing and related activities, and their evaluation of the innovations was based on empirical evidence rather than impressionistic judgements. Jihad's research, for example, focused on implementation and management of team writing (see Table 6.1 and 7.2.7), and he and Sadik, both of whom had expressed negative attitudes to team writing in the baseline study, changed their positions as a result of their AR (see 6.4.1.3 and 5.3.1)

In the Summative Feedback Questionnaire and follow-up interviews, several teacher-researchers reported the effect of their classroom research on introducing changes in classroom pedagogy. The novices appeared to be enthusiastic about the innovations and reported high response rate on their part and that of their students to the innovations. Ola, for example, explained how team writing influenced her classroom culture:

> Collaboration between students made them get closer to each other and as I am supervising their work I also got closer to them. I became more aware of their needs and wants (Questionnaire).

Similarly, Reem wrote that her research helped her to "know more about [students], their problems and weak areas through their comments". Abeer reported the same effects:

> It [her AR] has given me a clear idea about how to reflect on my students' attitudes, how to observe every word they say ... and see what it indicates, e.g., the questionnaire I gave my students enabled me to know about the way they think and the things they believe in (Questionnaire).

Likewise, the experienced iterviewees (Noor and Shehab) expressed positive responses to the new ideas. In the interview, Noor said that the CAWRP experience "consolidated her belief in the value of teacher-teacher and student-student collaboration". She saw a strong relationship between the two and believed that teachers who were supportive to collaboration with their colleagues in theory

and practice were the same teachers who successfully implemented team writing and related activities:

> Through collaboration we could help one another, benefit from one another, and consequently help our students learn much better through collaboration (see Shehab's view in Box 7.4).

But Noor (6.3.1.1) wanted collaboration, whether among students or teachers, to remain an "encouraged" option, "never" a "forced" one, because "some people like to work individually ". She described how her AR had changed the way she treated students' complaints:

> In the past, maybe students gave me certain complaints that I did not care about. Now I reflect on every word they say. For example, if they say "We don't have any grammar in the class; why don't you give us grammar?", I start to think: "Yes, why?" (see Shehab's view in Box 7.8).

In contrast, three teachers who did not carry out AR were resistant to initiated classroom innovations (team writing and related feedback techniques) and to research procedures that aimed to investigate students' receptivity to the new practices. Sonia, for example, expressed explicit rejection of team writing in the baseline, and did not consent to have her classroom observed in the Main study. She was also unwilling to allow the distribution of the Student Questionnaire (Appendix 4.7) in her class by the end of the research period, saying that it would "reflect badly" on her. Similarly, the Director did not facilitate observation of her class though she had consented to it in writing. She also hindered the distribution of the Student Questionnaire at the Centre level, saying that "teachers wish to see [it]" (memo). In order to alleviate possible teacher anxiety over getting students' perspective, I agreed to make the questionnaire available to all the teachers and to get their consent to distributing it. However, only Sonia and Rola saw it before the arrest of the project. It is likely that this questionnaire, the aim of which was to investigate the interrelationship between teacher development and student learning, has speeded project arrest. It may be the case that resistant colleagues, whatever the cause of their resistance, be it insecurity, divergent opinion on pedagogy, perception of teacher status, or personality conflict with the researcher, will only

eventually become engaged when they can see the benefit of an innovation over time (see 7.2.7).

7.2.4 Constraints on the CAWRP

Participants' critical evaluation of constraints on the CAWRP was an essential part of the Summative Feedback Questionnaire. I listed 14 contextual factors that emerged in the Main Phase data, including "Errors committed by the project initiator". Respondents were asked to select the constraints they thought were "relevant" and "add others" of their own, if needed. I also urged them, in writing, to "specify" my errors in their end comments in order for me to learn from them. Table 7.1 on the next page presents the findings. The constraints are listed according to their frequency.

Table 7.1 Participants' Evaluation of Constraints on the CAWRP (No. 10)

Constraint	Frequency (%)
1. Teacher overload	10 (100%)
2. Course time constraints	8 (80%)
3. Scheduling the main project activity before the holiday	8 (80%)
4. Two projects running at the same time	6 (60%)
5. Lack of motivation on the part of some teachers	6 (60%)
6. Insufficient understanding on the part of some staff of the aims of the project perhaps because of not reading the clarification sheets and other handouts and announcements	5 (50%)
7. Mixing personal and academic matters	5 (50%)
8. Insufficient moral support and encouragement for the project	4 (40%)
9. Bias against some teachers and dominance of some others	3 (30%)
10. Errors committed by the project initiator (please specify.)	2 (20%)
11. Other - unplanned holidays - resistance to change	1 (10%)

As can be seen in Table 7.1, there is unanimous agreement that the main constraint was "teacher overload". Initially, I tended to believe that overload was

caused by external factors that forced many teachers to work overtime or do other jobs. However, when we realise that the majority of "full participants" were indeed the most overloaded teachers (see 6.2), the interpretation shifts to linking the overload problem to the fact that "two projects [were] running at the same time" (item 4). This was an artificial constraint that could have been avoided by adherence to the ethical code agreed in the Baseline Phase. Ethically, this was needed in view of "course time constraints" (item 2) over which we had no control. The fact that the main project activity (reporting and discussing TAR) was scheduled to take place on the last working day before the mid-term holiday and the feast at the end of the fasting month (item 3) indicates another ethical problem in this study.

Two teachers (Reem and Hind) selected the item "Errors committed by the project initiator" and explained their position in end comments. Reem, my research partner, wrote:

> I cannot say error, but we thought you were just a bit pushy or insisting at the beginning of the course although we were a bit busy and confused with our Material Evaluation Project.

Hind believed that I was "Sometimes offended by some teachers disability [sic] to participate in the project".

Indeed, looking at it from this point in time, I feel that there is much truth in what these two colleagues said. Yes, at the beginning I tried hard to persuade the teachers to participate in project activities. I was aware of the pressure put on them by having to cope simultaneously with two demanding projects. Lack of response, initially, made me worry. This inevitably showed on my face and in my behaviour.

Having those reactions at the back of my mind, I probed in the summative follow-up interview to find out teachers' response/reaction to my "pushing". The five teacher-researchers I interviewed believed that they needed to be pushed initially. Sadik, for example, said "pushing is something good because I don't actually do things if I am not pushed". He reflected on his initial reaction and the "pushing" he had received:

> ... somebody who is not convinced that he is capable of doing one thing, and somebody is just trying to convince him, to show him that 'you are capable; I mean you are like others. All you need is being aware of yourself'. ... The way you guided us affected us. You gave us not only theoretical points but also practical ones and a lot of encouragement. ...

7.2.5 The Self and the Other

Awareness of oneself and the other figured prominently in the project evaluation data. Box 7.4 (on the next page) provides a sample of comments representing the picture described by the majority of CAWRP participants, particularly the action researchers (see 4.5.2 and 6.2). In spite of some inevitable differences between people's perspectives, the picture that has emerged in the data is positive, and there are healthy signs of genuine collegiality and collaboration at different levels. Tension and Conflicts are inevitable in AR because it often involves change (see 3.3.2), which is destabilising to people's security (see 3.3.2). Conflicts in AR however, can be viewed positively. Indeed, experience in this project has shown that they were necessary challenges for generating teacher creativity (see 5.2.2, for example). In facing them, the CAWRP full participants contributed to promoting a dynamic professional culture that will keep the Centre developing beyond the timeline of project phases and stages (see 8.3 and 8.6).

Box 7.4 Awareness of oneself and the others

Self

- The thing that was pushing me was my motivation. ... I felt that I had to attend for my own benefit. I needed to learn. As a teacher, I should be a learner all my life ... (Abeer: interview).

Students

- I used to believe that many of my students' learning strategies ... are predictable by me, as I have long teaching experience. I discovered that was not the case. Students are always creative; their learning is clearly unpredictable, and the strategies they use must be verified to facilitate their learning and my teaching. (Shehab: interview)

Colleagues

- Their collaboration, their encouragement and their help ... gave me much confidence and comfort (Noor: questionnaire).
- They've always showed collaboration and support for each other. It was even clearer in this project despite all the constraints and stress they have upon them due to work and life difficulties. (Hind: questionnaire)

Director

- She is busy all the time. ... She ... tries to share with us difficulties in teaching, but ... her work is something bigger than the hours she teaches, ... that's why sometimes she asks colleagues to teach for her. ... (Sadik: interview).

Facilitator/Researcher

- Thank you very much for what you did for the Centre. It is now very difficult for us to see the significance of what we got from the project, but I think as time passes we'll realize how great the project is and how much it gives to the Centre (Ola: interview).

7.2.6 Success/Failure of the CAWRP

Several questions in the Summative Feedback Questionnaire aimed at investigating participants' views regarding the success/failure of the CAWRP. Two are particularly relevant: (a) "Has the project proved the viability of a collaborative [action research] approach to teacher development at the ESPC?" and (b) "On the whole, has the project been a success or a failure?". In answer to the first question,

nine respondents selected "Yes", and one did not respond. Three teachers did not justify their answers (Box 7.5).

Box 7.5 Perspectives on the viability of the CAWRP approach to TD

Full Participants

- [Yes] The answer lies in the action researches carried out by Ts at the ESPC and the participation in the Tunis Conference (Jihad).
- [Yes] Many people at the ESPC started working in teams and they proved to be successful (Noor).
- [Yes] ... there were individual oral presentations that were good. But collaborative ones were ... more effective and interesting. Collaboration is supported on my part (Sadik).
- [Yes] Through the project, I could realize the great benefits of collaboration in relation to teacher development as well as student development. I believe one is more creative when one works with a partner. In our case, collaboration was a success (Ola).
- [Yes] Our colleagues are very collaborative, but it is just a matter of time constraint and overload ... So, a teacher should choose a close colleague to be able to communicate with whenever possible (Reem).
- [Yes] It is viable ... because in spite of some difficulties, including the reluctance of some teachers, there will be always teachers keen to do something, to improve themselves. This project has proved that this is possible because we managed to work together and to achieve progress for the good of our students (Abeer).

Moderate and Occasional Participants

- [Yes] ... (Shaza, Salma).
- [...] (Hind).

Almost all the project evaluators agreed that the project proved its viability. Hind had a different view, which she expressed in answer to another question on "insider/outsider intervention":

> My MA was about teacher's personal and professional development through self-evaluation. I've learnt that this great aim cannot be achieved if it was not fully self- initiated. Encouraging is very important but very sensitive, and pushing is very negative. So, one should be very aware and alert to all the little things that might affect the process of introducing such innovation.

For Hind, self-initiation does not include extrinsic motivation. This a maxim of hers

that appears prominently in the data. The majority, however, viewed intrinsic and extrinsic motivation as essential and complementary (see 8.3.5 for discussion).

Participants' answers to the second question on project success or failure were positive. All, including Hind, agreed that the CAWRP was "a success" (see Box 7.6).

Box 7.6 Perspectives on the CAWRP success

Full Participants

- ... the results speak for themselves: Action research, participation in the Tunis Conference, and more self-awareness has been noticed in every aspect (Jihad).
- The project initiator was very hardworking and very persistent. At the same time she was very friendly and helpful to all participants. Most of the participants were collaborative and very dedicated. So the project, I think, is great success (Noor).
- The goals have been realized (5 teachers are going to Tunis!) (Shehab).
- I mentioned previously (the last feedback sheet) that it is the first time I feel others as well as me highly interested in attending, participating and discussing problems. No one could raise our curiosity and interest to such extent (Sadik).
- It is a success because it taught us many new things including methods of teaching, collaboration, doing a research, how to read and write, etc. What is most important, however, is that it taught us how to share and care and it made us one family (Ola).
- It encouraged me as a teacher that I can be something more; that is, I can make a mini-research. It supported my belief in myself and my colleagues. Regarding information and knowledge, it was very successful (Reem).
- I think the project succeeded in achieving the set goals ... that will be beneficial for ... students and ourselves (Abeer).

Moderate and Occasional Participants

- It has introduced some new methodology and concepts and opened the way for teachers to a better knowledgement [sic] of themselves and their potentials (Salma).
- With four teachers participating in Maghreb Conference with papers that was [sic] done through this project, I believe it was a very good success (Hind).
- In fact I cannot judge objectively because I took part on a very limited scale ... (Shaza).

Implicit in the ten voices are the seven criteria Allwright (1993: 128-29) stresses as important in evaluating proposals or projects that integrate research, development, and pedagogy. These are: relevance, reflection, continuity, collegiality, learner

development, teacher development, and theory building (see 3.3.1.4). The ten teachers/evaluators appear to agree that "Teacher-initiated action research has proved to be an effective and viable approach to TD at the ESPC", *their* answer to the first research question in the Summative Feedback and Follow-up Stage (see 7.1).

7.2.7 Continuity

Continuity, the future of TAR at the ESPC, was investigated by asking respondents to the Summative Feedback Questionnaire and the follow-up interview questions about their continuation plans and also their suggestions and recommendations for improving projects like the CAWRP, depending on their experience of it. Eight of the ten teachers who responded to the Questionnaire wrote comments in the open-ended section with the future in mind. These have been classified into two main categories: (a) content and methodology; and (b) management and collegiality (see Box 7.7).

Box 7.7 Teachers' Suggestions regarding future AR projects at the ESPC *

Content and Methodology

- A long-term project (Jihad, Sadik, Ola, Hind, Reem).
- More time to be devoted for theoretical discussions (Ola, Sadik).
- One project at a time (Jihad, Sadik, Ola, Hind, Reem).
- Separate project meetings from others ... (Jihad, Sadik, Ola, Hind, Reem).
- Making it obligatory ... (Sadik).
- Inviting outsiders to attend ... will be highly motivating ... (Sadik, Ola).

Management and Collegiality

- [In] action research ... difficulties ... might be used for the benefit of the project. (Noor).
- ... better arrangements with regard to [off duty] time (Salma).
- ... more patience and real understanding of the whole situation at the Centre (Hind).

* Where more than one name is mentioned, the words belong to the first mentioned. Others' comments are much similar.

All the comments in this Box imply a recommendation for continuity, and in four cases, it is explicitly stated. Jihad, for example, suggested a "long-term project",

funded "by the University, at least partly", "because the benefits are not only personal" but also institutional. Ola also stressed the need for continuity. In her view, " this project needs to be extended as soon as possible [and] should not stop" because "There is always a good chance for us to develop if we keep on what we started" (Questionnaire).

The teachers' vision of "continuity" was further probed in the follow-up interviews. All five teacher-researchers believed that the project should be replicated, focusing on another problematic curriculum area. Four medical course teachers suggested focusing on listening and speaking, and Abeer, the Hum course teacher, wanted reading to be the focus. Their choices indicate the extent their classroom AR has helped them to understand the particular needs of their students (cf. Med students' wants in 2.5.1.3). Sadik's suggestion that projects like the CAWRP should be "obligatory" was a surprise. It indicates the extent to which he feels he has benefited but, at the same time, raises issues about the fundamental principles of AR.

In the follow-up interviews I asked each of the five: "Where do you intend to go from here?". All indicated that they would go on carrying out AR and gave their reasons. Sadik, for example, indicated that the CAWRP had enhanced his academic and social status and broken the circle of his isolation, making him happier and more secure:

> People look at you differently when you are a person of knowledge. Knowledge is power. My knowledge of research has increased a lot.
>
> I am collaborating with a colleague in teaching the Core and in doing a research. Everything is wonderful to me because I am not alone.

The idea of going to a regional conference, Sadik pointed out, might have been the main motivation for him to carry out research, initially. But "Now ... I do research for myself, not necessarily to present at a conference". Ola expressed almost the same reasons. Noor's answer came loud and clear: "I'm hooked to classroom research". Abeer, the youngest teacher, also said she would go on:

> ... because it gives me a better idea about my students, how they think, the things they expect ... I need to get feedback from them. Research is the main way I can get this feedback.

Teachers' desire for continuity and suggested changes were communicated to the Centre Director formally, as this extract from my letter shows:

> Many teachers believed that projects like the CAWRP should be carried out at the Centre in the future. Asked what they would like the next project to focus on, several teacher researchers suggested listening and speaking, believing that their students needed help in these two areas. ... It would be interesting if you brought up the idea in a staff meeting to see what the teachers would suggest (10 June 1997).

The Director responded positively. A staff meeting was held in which the teachers' suggestions were discussed. Sadik and Ola were asked to inform me about the staff decision. With their letter, they enclosed a letter from the Director (dated 5 July). Its message and tone were positive:

> I am writing with reference to your fax dated 10 June to inform you of the decision made in the general staff meeting held on 3 July in which the suggestions you made in your fax were discussed.
>
> First, it was agreed to set up an action research project on the teaching/learning of listening and speaking (ARLS: Action Research on Listening and Speaking). Second, [Ola] and [Sadik] have been chosen to undertake the design and implementation of this project with the understanding that all ESPC teachers will be involved. Finally, we would be grateful if you could send [Ola] and [Sadik] all the materials that would be of help to them.

My immediate response was a thank-you letter, followed shortly after by nine papers on listening and speaking.

Colleagues who carried out research within the CAWRP kept in touch. In April 1997, three teachers went to present improved versions of their papers at another conference in Morocco. They knew about the Moroccan conference from colleagues at the Tunis conference. From Morocco, they sent me news of their success (postcard: 3 April 1997):

> We are writing to you from Erfoud, Morocco, on the last day of the 11th Annual MATE [Moroccan Association of Teachers of English] conference. We did our presentations with no less success than in Tunisia.
>
> Thank you for the help, love, and care you have always shown.
> (Shehab, Sadik, Ola)

Three months latter, I received a letter from Sadik and Ola with more news on continuity:

> Dear Sada,
>
> We are writing to say "thank you ..." for the help and "pushing" you have been giving ... us. ... Since you encouraged us to write to Tunisia, we went to Morocco and all the time you were on our minds. Now we are preparing ourselves to go to Jordan for another conference. Four papers [Noor's, Shehab's, Ola's and Sadik's] ... were all accepted (30 July 1997).

In early September, 1997, I received a letter from Ola informing me about their participation in the Amman conference ("23-28 August") in Jordan. First she wrote about the influence of the CAWRP on her:

> I owe you my success ... . You have made me do things I've never thought I could do. You have created inside me a person who loves to work, not for self-benefit but to benefit all those around. This is a gift I'll try to keep forever.

She went on to tell me about the group's and her own achievements in the new conference:

> ... As usual, the Syrian group was one of the best. The topics of our papers, and the way we presented them were ... appreciated. My presentation was better than I expected. It was about "Dictionaries and dictionary-use and their role in the teaching/learning process". After the presentation I had an interview with the Jordanian T.V. about my paper and the conference in general. It was very short, but it meant a lot to me.

A letter from Noor arrived a few months later, with her New Year's greetings (22 December 1997). She began by encouraging me and went on to tell about her achievements since the ending of my field work:

> ... You are a hardworking researcher and you deserve brilliant success. I feel proud of you and your work.
>
> As for me, I think I got hooked ... You encouraged our first step, I mean the other colleagues and me, and now we can't stop. ... I gave a presentation in Sfax, Tunisia. The title was "When Students Implement their Chosen Material", and that was in April 1997. I wrote a paper for the Amman conference in August 1997 ... The title ... was "Arabic sometimes Needed in EFL Classrooms". In Nov. 1997, I was at Helwan University, Cairo, and I ran a workshop about

> "Speaking out While Implementing Learning Strategies". ... I am now preparing for a new research. I sent the abstract ... to TESOL Arabia '98 ... in the ... Emirates.

She explained how she collected her data and pointed out that collaboration with her students was a basic strategy:

> My papers have all been based on classroom experiments ... and reflections of both students and teacher and sometimes the observation of a colleague .... I got the data through questionnaires, interviews, recording, or classroom observation. I have always depended on students' collaboration, which proved to be very successful and interesting for both teacher and students.

She also mentioned the new AR project and her contribution to it:

> A project is being run at the Centre by some colleagues on speaking and listening. ... I am to prepare for a workshop for the next meeting.

Noor, however, ended her letter with a somber note, saying that she felt she was "working hard for no real credit".

I think, depending on experience in the CAWRP, that the "credit" these EFL/ESP teachers looked for is of two types: (a) a formal recognition and appreciation of their work, something tangible added to their professional files, and (b) scholarships to do their higher studies abroad. On several occasions during my fieldwork, teachers told me about their academic aspirations. I suggested that their aspirations could be realised if they carried out research and reported on it at conferences, as this would bring them to the attention of potential sponsors (British Council and USIS, for example). In July 1997, I received a letter from Shehab, informing me that his "dream" to do higher studies in the UK was about to be realised:

> I would like to tell you that Cambridge University has admitted me to pursue [an] ... MPhil ... I am waiting for ... a ... scholarship. I did an interview in the British Council for this purpose ...

On 9 September 1997, he wrote again saying that he and Salma were granted scholarships to study in the UK, she at Leeds, and he at Cambridge.

In their personal communication, colleagues who kept in touch focused on their research and conference participation, and there was no mention of other teachers' researches or team writing, the pedagogic innovation. Before leaving to spend Christmas in Damascus, Shehab wrote from Cambridge asking if I wanted anything from the ESPC. I sent a letter to the Director asking for her consent to get follow-up data through Shehab's administering a short questionnaire (Appendix 4.8) on my behalf and looking at students' results. The aim of the questionnaire was to find out what happened to TAR and team writing after the project ended. I wanted to know if the teachers who had not completed their research and write up during the CAWRP implementation did so later. I was also curious to know the examination results of the Sci-Tec course students in the second trimester of 1997. All the teachers who taught this course were CAWRP participants, and the three teachers of Sci-Tec Group Two carried out classroom AR (see 6.2).

The Director facilitated the collection of data. Nine teachers, seven of whom carried out action research within the CAWRP, returned the questionnaire. It shows that the teachers who were not allowed time to report on their findings in the final CAWRP meeting (see section 6.2) completed their research but did not write it up. No reasons were mentioned. Perhaps those colleagues needed moral and academic support and a little "pushing".

There was encouraging evidence about teacher-mediated classroom innovation. Medical students' teachers reported high-rate student receptivity to team writing. I was interested in the responses of three medical course APP teachers whose classroom research focused on collaborative writing: Jihad, Sadik and Ola (see Table 6.1). Jihad, whose focus was "Making collaborative APP writing more efficient", wrote about his research findings:

> The findings showed, both in the outcome of the collaborative work and final presentations of the students, that most of the students admitted that they had not expected to have such results and benefits from collaborative work. Moreover, those who opposed collaborative work at the beginning changed their minds and became its defenders.

Ola also reported positive teacher and student responses:

> Collaborative writing was very helpful in my class. It helped me to

> understand my students' problems in relation to writing. It also helped my students to understand their own problems and to be aware of how to deal with them. My students realized through collaborative writing how important it was to work together because they learned through sharing, and so did I. Doing and writing up a research about collaborative writing with a colleague made it easier for both of us to learn and improve. This is an experience I'd love to try again.

All nine questionnaire respondents, except one who did not carry out AR, recommended team writing for the courses in which they tested it. All, however, believed that further experimentation was needed to determine its value for both students and teachers. Sadik mentioned raising the idea of team writing with his new medical students, who had just started their course for the academic year 1997-1998, and reported surprising differences in students' initial responses:

> Now I am teaching three Med groups, three APPs, and I am using collaborative writing and peer-editing.
> The first group 24 students, 12 pairs
> The second group 22 students , 5 pairs + 12 singles
> The third (unknown yet)

The difference between the first and second group's response is interesting. It indicates the centrality of continuity in TAR and does not support the idea of generalizability, even at the level of the same type of course, if we want to preserve students' freedom to choose whether to collaborate or not . Commenting on his experience of team writing in the previous academic year, Sadik wrote:

> Collaborative work (writing) is not only successful at the level of students but also at the level of researchers and tutors. I really wonder if it is possible for two tutors to conduct and write one dissertation for their PhD.

These reports about team writing confirm the truth of Fullan and Hargreave's statement: "*Teacher development and student development are reciprocally related*" (1992a: 109; italics in original).

Collaborative TAR is further supported by the examination results of the students whose teachers were actively involved in the CAWRP. Table 7.2 shows

the results of the Sci-Tec course students in the trimester that preceded the CAWRP implementation and in the one in which it was implemented (trim. 2).

Table 7.2 Sci-Tec Course Exam Results before the CAWRP and during it

Year/trimester	Total No. of exam Takers	No. passed	No. Failed
1996-97 (trim. 1)	18	15 (83.3 %)	3 (16.7 %)
1996-97 (trim. 2)	35	35 (100 %)	0 (0 %)

Table 7.2 shows improvement in pass rate, and the quality of this pass rate is significantly higher in the second trimester. This suggests a positive effect of TAR. Individual students' scores in the second trimester were markedly higher than those in the first trimester. Table 7.3 shows the total exam results (out of 100 points) of Sci-Tec Group Two, whose teachers (Reem, Mustafa, and Sada) were involved in teaching all the components and in carrying out AR.

Table 7.3 Sci-Tec Group Two Total Exam Scores (No. 18)

Under 50 (fail)	50-59 (pass)	60-69 (good)	70-79 (very good)	80-89 (excellent)	90-100 (Honours)
0	0	4	4	8	2

These are not ordinary results of these students (cf. Table 1.2 for students' level). As can be seen, the vast majority received scores of 70% and over.

Finally, Table 7.4 shows Sci-Tec Group Two students' scores in the APP, written and oral. Each is given eight points (a total of 16 out of 100).

Table 7.4 Sci-Tec Group Two Scores in APP Exams (No. 18)

Exam Part	Under 4 (fail)	5-6	7	8 (full)
Written Paper	0	3	11	4
Oral Interview	0	2	13	3

Fractions over 0.5 were forced into 1.

Again, these results are uncommon in the APP component at the ESPC, even in more advanced courses. It seems that TAR has empowered the teachers and their students. This tentative conclusion about the effect of TAR on students' results

needs to be substantiated by further research at the ESPC over a number of courses.

As mentioned before, only four teachers continued to carry out new AR projects. They gave their reasons in the 1998 questionnaire, revealing in their own words the empowering effects of TAR. Like liberated birds, they have been flying from tree to tree in the ELT regional park, singing their different EFL songs, empowered by knowledge, self-confidence and high self-esteem. This can be seen in Box 7.8 (next page) and the following extracts from questionnaire responses and from personal communication:

- I gave a paper at Rabat University, Morocco, and will be presenting in Irbid, Jordan, in July 1998 (Noor).
- "Reading skills and prediction", Amman Conference (1998) (Shehab).
- "Speaking Activities and Classroom Discussions": The Fourth EFL Conference, the American University, Cairo, 1997 (Sadik).
- "Strategies used by Syrian postgraduate medical students when translating an English medical text into Arabic", Irbid University, Jordan, July 1998 (Sadik).
- Ola and I gave papers at TESOL Arabia Conference in the Emirates, March 1998 (Sadik).

Box 7.8 Teachers' reasons for continuing TAR (1998)

- I think I am "hooked". Carrying out classroom research puts real life in the process of teaching. With every new idea, I feel I am a new person, and my students feel more motivated and more enthusiastic. ... "Research means creativity and creativity means life. I think our teachers and students need to be creative and there are many issues that need to be looked into (Noor).
- It is interesting to pursue what has been considered a successful methodology. Higher and better self-esteem (Shehab).
- I have been on the line of carrying out research since I started it in 1996-97 because I believe that every teacher is an action researcher ... As long as I teach I will always carry out research. It is in my blood to improve my teaching and my students' learning by any means. Besides, research is life, one's self and career (Sadik).
- Carrying out classroom research has become ... a very important part of my career as a teacher. ... I can't imagine teaching without classroom research. ... [The] CAWRP was ... my first opportunity ... It opened my eyes ... (Ola).

The latest news about the Centre action researchers came from all four of them. They sent me copies of their new abstracts for 1999 conferences. Shehab, Noor and Ola presented new research papers at TESOL Arabia '99 in the United Arab Emirates. Sadik faxed his news on 5 February 1999:

> Your efforts were not in vain, and your little buds have finally blossomed. Time has come very quickly for me to cross the ocean and present a paper in TESOL New York. I wrote the abstract myself with no help at all, read about the topic, used the internet, and tried to produce something new. The title is *Using corpora in teaching listening*. I have now a corpus of about 60 000 words taken from authentic medical listening ... as well as medical lectures. In fact, I am introducing something intermediate that goes between macro listening and micro listening, but in a way closer to micro listening skills.

Then he pointed out a problem he was facing and asked for help:

> Here I am now. However, I still need a lot of references about computational linguistics, computer assisted language learning, corpus linguistics, and authors like Higgins. Here in Syria, references are almost nil. ... I wonder if you have the time to go to the library ... I am in real need ...

These extracts indicate not only the extent of Sadik's development, among others, but also the value and contribution of collaborative TAR. The ethos of collaboration, which was appreciated by the teacher-researchers during the CAWRP implementation, has kept growing and expanding beyond the limits of its phases and stages to help us deal with contextual factors that impact negatively on our development. Constraints tend to diminish when confronted by the power of *genuine teacher collaboration.*

7.3 Summary

This chapter has reported the findings of the Summative Evaluation and Follow-up Stage, the final one in this study. Evidence shows that project aims and objectives have been achieved to a substantial extent. Project full participants have become more aware of the nature of writing and the necessary concepts and practices in teaching/learning academic writing. Through the learning opportunities with which

they were provided, they have also been able to familiarise themselves and their colleagues with the aims, techniques, strategies, and challenges of TAR. Full participants have introduced the desired innovations with a good degree of positive feedback. Their beliefs and attitudes have also been checked and revised in the process of experimentation, reflection, and critical evaluation. Evidence suggests that the principles of experiential and team work have aided the process of teacher learning and pedagogic innovation. Evidence shows that the majority agree that the project has succeeded in achieving its aims and objectives in spite of the challenges. Follow-up data support this conclusion. Evidence has been presented showing that the project has taken root and been institutionalised. This can be seen in the agreement of all the teachers to replicate the project focusing on another problematic curriculum area (listening and speaking). The data suggest, however, that only the teachers who went beyond the context and presented papers at regional conferences have carried out more action research and reported on it.

The next chapter discusses the findings with reference to the literature and points out their implications for the local and similar contexts.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Discussion and Implications

8.1 Introduction

As I have stated in Chapter 1, this study set out to investigate the potential of teacher-initiated action research (TAR) for teacher development (TD) and pedagogic innovation in a specific context, the ESP Centre (ESPC) at Damascus University. The pedagogic issue researched centred on the area of teaching/learning academic writing, in general, and the teaching/learning of a challenging core component called the academic project paper (APP), in particular. On the basis of the findings of a baseline study which helped to draw a clear picture of teacher and context needs, a TD project called the Collaborative Academic Writing Research Project (CAWRP) was proposed and endorsed by the ESPC Director and teachers.

This last chapter of the thesis summarises the findings related to the five research questions. It discusses these findings and their implications and presents some practical recommendations. These are followed by a summing up of the chief lessons which the researcher has learnt and consideration of the study's significance and limitations.

8.2 Summary of the Main Findings

8.2.1 The Contribution of the Orientation Stage Activities

The first research question, "How do the Orientation Stage activities contribute to the participants' development?", is mainly concerned with the role of the second-order AR (see 2.6.3). The results reported in Chapter Five indicate that the project has

achieved its Orientation Stage aims to a good extent (see 1.6.2). There is sufficient evidence to suggest that the majority of the participants have become (see entry points in 2.5.2; 6.3.1; and 6.4.1):

- aware of the process and product approaches to teaching academic writing and clearer about their role as teachers and supervisors of project writing (5.2.1 and 5.4.1);
- aware of the theory and practice of TAR and the value of this approach for their development and that of their students (5.2.2 and 5.4.2);
- aware of needed innovative ideas about effective writing methodology and their relevance to the context (5.3 and 5.4.3);
- aware of the value and aim of critical reflection and evaluation and, as a result, more accepting to self- and peer evaluation (5.4.4 and 5.5.1);
- aware of the value of critical reading and collaborative discussion and interaction, and, as a result, more motivated to read, attend activities, and collaborate (5.5.2.1); and many were
- motivated to carry out classroom AR (5.5.2.2) - the *objective* of the Orientation Stage.

8.2.2 The Contribution of TAR to Teacher Development

The second research question, "In what ways do teacher-initiated action research and related activities (e.g., writing, conference participation, etc.) contribute to the teacher-researchers' development?", deals with the role of the first-order AR, the teachers'.

In the Research and Reporting Stage, the focus was on carrying out AR and trying out team writing and related practices. This meant collecting classroom data and analysing them, presenting progress reports in whole group validation meetings and receiving critical feedback from peers, reading additional sources, consulting peer supervisors, etc. The teacher-researchers went through all or most of these processes, and five were able to achieve the objective of this stage: writing a conference paper and

presenting it at a regional conference. Chapter Six presents two case studies, which exemplify many of the key processes and achievements of the eight full participants. On the whole, all *full participants* developed in ways similar to those of Noor and Sadik. Evidence shows that they have become:

- more aware of the nature of writing and the methodology of teaching and learning academic writing (see 6.3.2.1; 6.4.2.1; 7.2.1; cf. 2.5.2.1; 2.5.2.2; 6.3.1 and 6.4.1);
- clearer about the theory and practice of AR (see 6.3.2; 6.4.2; 7.2.2; cf. 2.5.2.2; 6.3.1.2; 6.4.1.2);
- more intrinsically motivated to undertake AR (see 6.3.2; 6.4.2; 7.2.2; cf. 2.5.2.2);
- more reflective, reflexive, and tactful in managing challenges to collaborative TAR (6.3.2.2; 6.4.2.2; 7.2.4; 7.2.5; cf. 5.4.4);
- more aware of the benefits of collaborative action research and more open to and tolerant of peers' critical evaluation (6.3.2.1; 6.4.2.1; 6.3.2.2; 7.2.2);
- more aware of their students' strengths and needs and of the potential of working collaboratively with the learners (6.3.2; 6.4.2; 7.2.5; cf. 6.3.1.3 and 6.4.1.3);
- enthusiastic to read published research (6.3.2.2; 6.4.2.3); and
- more self-aware, self-confident, and self-determined to achieve (6.3.2, 6.4.2; 7.2.2).

8.2.3 Teacher Development and Classroom Innovation

This section summarises the findings of the third research question, namely, "What can we discover about the interrelationship between teacher development and classroom innovation?".

Descriptions of the teachers' receptivity to team writing and related practices (peer feedback, peer editing, and progress presentations) have shown that the innovations were positively received by teachers and learners (see 5.3; 5.4.3; 6.3.2.3; 6.4.2.3; 7.2.3). The majority of APP teachers in the medical course, the main target of classroom innovation, implemented team writing and reported high student response. Teachers who carried out AR were the most enthusiastic about the innovations and

there were strong indicators of change in attitude (see 6.4.2.3; 7.2.3). The same shift in attitude on the part of some student-resistors was reported by colleagues (see 7.2.2 and 7.2.7). Resistors to team writing were three experienced colleagues who either did not believe in this practice or had other personal reasons that were not clearly identifiable in the data. All three did not carry out AR, a point that might suggest some kind of attitudinal reaction either to AR or to the project initiator (see 8.3.7 for discussion).

8.2.4 Summative Reflections and Continuity

This section is concerned with two research questions:

- Has TAR proved to be an effective and viable approach to TD at the ESPC in the participants' view? What are their justifications?
- What has happened to TAR and team writing, the pedagogic innovation, since fieldwork ended?

The findings reported in Chapter Seven complement and validate those in Five and Six. They point to the conclusion that TAR is an effective and viable approach to TD at the ESPC in the participants' view. Their main justification was that the CAWRP had been able to achieve its aims and objectives satisfactorily in spite of many challenges. In their view, teacher collaboration was the main factor of success. Some of the justifications mentioned are that collaborative TAR has

- enriched teacher knowledge of writing methodology and AR, both in theory and practice;
- modified or changed some teachers' beliefs and attitudes to writing, AR, and themselves and the others, mostly positively;
- brought teachers together and enhanced their collegiality and sense of belonging to the Centre;

- made teachers reflect and evaluate issues, beliefs, and attitudes constructively;
- encouraged teachers to read and write;
- introduced needed innovations (e.g., team writing and self-monitoring) in APP pedagogy;
- resulted in better student performance in the end-of-course-examination in all components, including the APP; and
- provided a practical collaborative framework for ongoing teacher and curriculum development at the Centre.

As for project continuity, follow-up evidence (see 7.2.7) suggests that

- the project has been replicated focusing on listening and speaking, as the teacher-researchers suggested in their summative evaluation of the CAWRP;
- two novice CAWRP participants have been selected by their colleagues to design and implement the new project, building on the CAWRP experience;
- four CAWRP participants (two experienced and two novice) have been actively engaged in carrying out classroom research and reporting on it both locally and at international conferences;
- team writing has been institutionalised as an *optional* alternative to individual APP writing; and
- some teachers need more sustainable support and encouragement than others in order to undertake AR and write up.

8.3 Discussion and Implications

The teacher-as-researcher movement in Britain is based on a vision of the curriculum as a theory of practice (Stenhouse 1975) and of teaching as a form of research (Elliott 1991). The aim is to transform the notion of teacher professionalism from authority-based to research-based, focusing on the teacher as the mediator of change. The CAWRP has added an increment to the rapidly growing pool of knowledge that

validates the empowering effects of TAR. However, it is a pioneer in the history of EFL/ESP teacher development in Syria and the Arab World. It is characterised by self-reliance, self-direction, and self-determination. Reports about the empowering effects of TAR in other contexts are numerous (see, for example, Nunan 1987, 1992b; Vulliamy and Webb, 1991, 1992; Elliott and Sarland 1995; Graves 1996; and 3.3.1.4; 3.5.4; 3.5.5). One such report is cited by van Lier (1996: 26-27), who quotes Bennett's statement about a survey of experienced teacher-researchers:

> Experienced teacher researchers stated that their research brought them many personal and professional benefits, including increased collegiality, a sense of empowerment, and increased self-esteem. Teacher researchers viewed themselves as being more open to change, more reflective, and better informed than they had been when they began their research. They now saw themselves as experts in their field ... better problem solvers and more effective teachers with fresher attitudes toward education. They also saw strong connections between theory and practice.

Similarly, Burton and Mickan (1993: 119), who directed the LIPT (languages inservice programme for teachers) in South Australia, write about how TAR, and writing up in particular, has empowered the teacher-researchers academically and professionally:

> The experience of writing made teacher-writers more familiar with the processes of writing for a professional audience and more at ease with reading more widely. 92 % of respondents in the final evaluation of LIPT said that they had continued to read professional publications since participating in LIPT. ... This response indicates that a professional renewal strategy had been successfully integrated in a number of teachers' normal routines.

These reports are consistent with the findings of this study in relation to the empowering effects of TAR in personal, professional, academic, and pedagogic development.

Success of the CAWRP can be attributed to the commitment, hard work, and dedication of its participants and to the principles and strategies which guided its design and methodology. The ones which emerged strongly and should, therefore, be elaborated on in this section, are: (1) relevance and authenticity; (2) feedback; (3) freedom and control; (4) collaboration and individuality; (5) motivation; (6) reflection

and reflexivity; (7) ownership; (8) involvement and participation; and, most importantly, (8) interaction. In discussing these principles and strategies, I start each time with participants' voices, and then refer to the theoretical insights that have influenced the project. This is in line with the teacher-centred approach adopted in this study and also with the principle of "staying close to the data" (Janesick 1994: 215), which is emphasised in qualitative research in general.

8.3.1 Relevance and Authenticity

When I thanked Noor at the end of my final interview with her, she wanted to add "a final word":

> The whole work, the whole project was very good, and it gave us a lot of things to learn, not only me but me and the other teachers. For me, it opened a way I was not aware of, which is very good, and I have to be thankful.

Relevance and authenticity were two main guiding principles of the project (see 2.5; 3.2; 4.3.2). They determined its design and the selection of the TD materials and related methodology. In language pedagogy, for example, relevance and authenticity of the materials and methodology are claimed to have the potential of generating learner interest (van Lier 1996: 12). The participants' high response rate to project materials and methodology, therefore, can be partly explained with reference to the relevance and authenticity principles (see 5.4 and 5.5). The TD activities (discussion circles, oral presentations, and the AR workshop), led by the participants themselves, helped to meet their affective, social, and professional needs (see 2.5.1.2; 2.5.2; 3.2; 4.5.3). Maslow (1970, 1972) sees self-actualisation as the goal of learning, and social factors have been shown to be motivating to participation (see 3.5.5; 4.4.2; 4.4.4). The teachers who contributed actively to this project felt empowered by knowing and the security of belonging to a group.

The theoretical implication is that relevance and authenticity should be basic criteria in TD programmes and the meanings of these two terms need to be sought with

reference to participants' needs and wants. It is necessary to identify these before intervention, relying on methods appropriate to the particular context of TD (see Benesch 1996).

8.3.2 Feedback

In her response to one of the feedback sheets that reported participants' critical evaluation of project activities and materials, Ola, a full participant novice colleague, wrote:

> It is really promising to see ... the majority ... responding to the questions in a way that showed interest and care. But, to be honest, some responses made me feel taken aback. ... I'm not saying that all answers should praise, and that no negative comment should be given. What I'm trying to say is that the tone of some responses showed little 'trust' in what we all have done so far. I feel that some teachers still don't see the progress achieved and the great benefit of what was done! (for other views, see 5.5.1.).

In line with the principles of "appropriate methodology" (see 4.3.3) and the maxim of "Practice what you preach" (3.4.2.3), participants in the CAWRP were regularly provided with feedback on their collective evaluation of the TD activities and the contribution of those activities to TD from the participants' own perspectives (see 4.4.6). This feedback strategy appears to have played an instrumental role in generating their curiosity to know. Signs of this curiosity were evident in the deep silence that prevailed when participants engaged in reading feedback sheets. Curiosity developed later into a spirit of exploration as they started to reflect and evaluate critically colleagues' feedback comments and read between the lines. Implicit in Ola's comment, for example, is a kind of division between two types of participants: teachers and teacher-administrators (see also 5.5.1; 6.4.2.2; and 8.3.1). Those in the latter category, two of whom are also experienced researchers, appear to have disappointed the novice researchers (the majority) for expressing lack of trust in what has been achieved. It seems that TAR has a destablising effect on those who are in power roles and familiar with this methodology (see also 5.2.2.1 and 7.2.2).

Participants' almost unanimous endorsement of continuity in the use of the feedback strategy (see 5.5.2.1) is a significant sign of its success. van Lier (1996: 48) writes:

> Receptivity, particularly when it is related to curiosity ... is clearly an important element in ... learning. But it would be a mistake to regard it as simply a passive state of openness rather than a spirit of exploration.

Brumfit and Mitchell (1990b: 6) make a similar comment. They define a "'researching' attitude as the systematisation of curiosity".

Feedback (written and oral) has been shown to be effective in promoting student learning, particularly in relation to teaching academic writing (see Daoud 1995b for a review of literature on feedback on writing). However, feedback in teacher learning is still a theoretical premise that needs to be substantiated by research. The present study has contributed a significant increment in support of its effectiveness. Findings suggest that feedback has an instrumental role in providing the kind of psychological and social support structures needed for teacher learning (see 5.4 and 5.5). Edge (1984) describes a face-saving feedback procedure he and his colleagues used in inservice training of school teachers in Turkey. His account sheds light on other possible reasons behind the success of feedback in the present study: (a) expressing "frank opinions" (p. 205), commenting on the task rather than on individuals, and (b) relying on writing (feedback questionnaires), which meant that threatening influences coming from authority figures (trainers, heads, etc.) were minimal. More research-based evidential support is needed to illuminate the role of feedback in teacher learning. Celani (1998), in her presentation at TESOL '98, pointed out the role of feedback, in general, and peer feedback, in particular, in raising awareness among ESP teachers in Brazil. According to her, "the whole process is expected to lead to setting principles, not rules" and that "Awareness-raising is at the heart of the process" of TD. This supports the approach followed in this study.

The implication is that feedback, particularly peer feedback, in explicit, genuine, and overt terms, should be an integral part of TD programmes. In other words, covert

research is not only inappropriate but destructive and unethical in projects that aim at TD (see 4.3.4). In a recent plenary presentation at TESOL '98, Kassabgy, an Egyptian teacher educator, stressed EFL teachers' need for more involvement in their education and pointed out, depending on cross-cultural studies she and two of her native colleagues had carried out, TESOL teachers' need for appreciation (see 1.4.6.2).

8.3.3 Freedom and Control

In a meeting with the Centre Director (22 January 1997, I urged her to explain to me why she would not allow us to meet and report on our research *after* the MEP (Material Evaluation Project) business:

> **Sada:** What harm do we do the Centre if we meet after the MEP meeting?
> **Director:** I like each and every one to attend the [research reports] meeting and not each and every one can attend after the MEP.
> **Sada:** We invite people, and those who do not want to attend, it is up to them. The project's motto is freedom.
> **Director:** Sada, Sada, please don't keep overusing these words.

There seems to be a misunderstanding of concepts here. "Freedom" refers to a responsible kind in the sense that adult individuals, teachers and learners, are provided with opportunities to learn and develop, and are free to select their course of action. At the same time, they are responsible for the consequences of their choice (see 4.3.1). This principle served the project well. There is compelling evidence in both first- and second-order AR in this study that the principle of responsible free choice that guided the CAWRP methodology appealed to the teachers and learners and drew them to the learning activities enthusiastically. As mentioned before, attendance rate was high in TD meetings (Table 5.1) and, in comparable ways, in classes run by innovative teachers who implemented the team writing initiative according to the principle of free choice (see 6.4.2.3 and Appendix 5.3).

Adult learners, both teachers and students, value their freedom and respond more positively and work harder if this freedom is guarded and respected. Autonomy

is a basic human need, and "no matter how infertile the soil may be in the ... environment, we can, if we look, find the seeds of 'autonomy' and 'individualization'" (D. Allwright 1988: 35). Out of the ten respondents to the Summative Feedback Questionnaire, only one agreed with the statement that "Teachers should be forced to learn and improve themselves". This implies that the policy of compelling teachers to attend inservice meetings at the ESPC (see 1.4.5.2), though unfavoured by the vast majority, is not totally rejected (see 7.2.7 for another example). Hargreaves (1992a: 230) points out that principals can resort to compulsion as a contingent, not permanent, measure to put teachers in touch with inservice reality and help them to become aware of its relevance to their needs. On the basis of this, he argues, "informal elements of recognition, trust and support" can be established. In short, both freedom and control are needed in a balanced and negotiated manner in order to avoid misunderstandings (see 4.3.1). I agree with van Lier (1996: 8), who argues:

> If there is excessive control, and we are told exactly what to do, then education ceases to be education. If, on the other hand, we reject all constraints, then education will likewise be impossible, since it will degenerate into chaos.

The implication of the above discussion is that freedom and control are both needed in education in general, including TD. The challenge is how to create the right balance between these two contradictory pulls. One aim of teacher research, van Lier (1996: 8) argues, is to articulate, examine, and develop "the constraints and resources in the educational setting, from the perspective of clear principles which guide the search, or rather, the research". This requires asking questions of the sort I asked the Director in the extract at the start of this section. These questions are needed in order "to develop strategies for action" (*ibid.*) (see 3.3.1.3; 3.4.2.4; 3.5.6.2). Similarly, an open and tolerant work environment that accommodates both collectivism and individualism is needed for such strategies to work in practice (see next section). Looking at things from a distance away from the stress and distress involved in introducing change, I have come to realise that my tendency to "push", sometimes excessively, probably created imbalance.

8.3.4 Collaboration and Individuality

Collaboration was highly appreciated by the majority of the study participants (see 5.5; 6.3.2.2; 6.4.2.2; 7.2.6). One question I asked the five teacher-researchers I interviewed by the end of fieldwork was: "If you were asked by an outsider to mention the main principle the CAWRP was based on, what would you say?". Interestingly, all five mentioned teacher collaboration in their answers:

- Working together, collaboration, helping one another ... (Noor).
- I think it is collaboration; we worked together ... (Abeer).
- Collaboration and team work ... were undoubtfully fruitful. ... (Shehab).
- It was bringing all the teachers together ... (Ola).
- ... collaboration with colleagues (Sadik).

Thus, collaboration in the sense of working together willingly for improvement is a needed TD strategy (see 2.5.1.2 and 2.5.1.3). In this project, every genuine contribution, no matter how minor it might be, was perceived as invaluable for achieving the set aims and objectives. Fullan and Hargreaves' (1992a: 74) view of collaboration was a guide (see 3.3.1.3). This vision does not preclude individuality and acknowledges and gives "voice to the teacher's *purpose*" (*ibid.*: 66). Indeed, Fullan and Hargreaves draw our attention to the fact that "disagreement is stronger and more frequent" in genuinely collaborative school cultures. Here "purposes, values, and their relationship to practice are discussed", and all this is "made possible by the bedrock of fundamental security on which staff relationships rest" (*ibid.*).

This study has shown that we, at the ESPC, are still lagging behind in our provision for individuality and appreciation of individual initiatives but have great potential for developing in this regard (see 7.2.7, for example). As we have seen in Chapter Two, the majority of teachers who were interviewed in the Baseline Phase believed in collaboration and showed willingness to contribute to the CAWRP as needed in order to achieve its aims and objectives. Many signed up for multiple activities and expressed their desire to work in teams. However, a few wanted to make individual contributions (see 2.5.1.2). The project catered for every participant's needs

and expectations as much as possible, and the effort exerted both individually and collaboratively yielded fruitful results for the givers, receivers, and the whole institution (see 5.2.1.1 and 5.3.2, for example). Still, there is evidence in the data to suggest the existence of "forms of collegiality [which] are superficial, partial, even counterproductive" (Fullan and Hargreaves 1992a: 83). This is not typical of our context (see Johnson and Johnson 1990; Hargreaves 1992a & b; 1994a, and 1995a &b). "Building collaborative cultures involves a long developmental journey", and there do not seem to be "easy short cuts" (Fullan and Hargreaves 1992a.: 77).

This discussion implies two things at least. First, teacher collaboration *can* bring about change in the institutional culture, a point stressed by many writers on teacher and school development (see Joyce 1990a and b; Hargreaves and Fullan 1992a and b; Hopkins *et al.* 1994). Secondly, collaboration in TD programmes is pointless without some degree of teacher autonomy (Stenhouse 1975). As Noor pointed out in her conference paper, we need to let the birds sing freely in order to "get the supreme creativity and inspiration" (see 6.3.2.2).

8.3.5 Motivation

In my final interview with her, Abeer reflected on the time I encouraged her and other colleagues to carry out AR:

> When you encouraged us to do research, it was a scary idea for me. Me, teaching for the first time in my life do research! I used to think that only teachers with long experience ...can do research. Yes, that's what I believed before, but now I know and believe that I can contribute; although I am a novice teacher. ... I can do something. (For more views, see 7.2.2; 7.2.4; 7.2.5; and 7.2.6.)

It has been shown that motivation is a highly important factor in learning, regardless of age and context (see 3.2.2). It has proved to be instrumental in this study in effecting positive outcomes. Ford (1992: 3) points out that motivation serves three psychological functions: it energises and regulates "goal-directed activity" and arouses

"emotional ... processes and personal agency beliefs".

According to van Lier (1996: 102), "Actions are judged as motivated on the basis of a combination of factors". Among them, "*intensity of engagement, attention, effort,* and *persistence*" are often "visible ... in observations and research" (italics in original). All these attributes have manifested in the work of the teachers who were full participants in this study. Evidence is abundant in the data to validate the role of motivation and motivational variables. It is also clear in the results of this study that there is an interplay between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and that the facilitator of TD can play an important role in motivating participation and involvement. Citing Carl Rogers, Knowles (1990: 78) lists ten guidelines for facilitators of adult learning. The first, relating to setting the "initial ... climate", has significantly contributed to the success of the CAWRP:

> The facilitator has much to do with setting the initial mood or climate of the group or class experience. If his own basic philosophy is one of trust in the group and in the individuals who compose the group, then this point of view will be communicated in many subtle ways.

This quotation from Rogers' humanistic legacy seems to agree to a great extent with van Lier's discussion of motivation and "intentionality". His, Knowles's, and Rogers's arguments may provide a logical interpretation of colleagues' responses and reactions to the motivation strategies I resorted to in this study. Citing research on motivation and learning, van Lier (1996: 116) indicates that the way people interpret the motive behind external rewards influences their responses:

> What will be the final verdict on this reward-versus-interest controversy? I suppose we must quote the usual cliché that the jury is still out. According to Deci and Ryan ... research to date indicates that external rewards, whether money, grades, or even praise, will all have the same motivation-killing effects, *if they are perceived as controlling.* ... (italics in original).

This is, I believe, the main issue in motivating people: how *they* perceive the motive(s) behind extrinsic rewards (see Chapter 3 in Everard and Morris 1985). I do agree with

van Lier (1996: 116) that "There is much that we have yet to learn about the role of motivational factors in learning" and that "The processes involved are vastly more complex than our research to date has been able to illuminate". It seems that we, human beings, see the world through a mirror held inside ourselves, one that reflects our inner selves. This study has shown that this self-mirror is insufficient and that colleagues working together need to be mirrors to one another in the way Edge (1992: 29) suggests:

> One way in which a colleague can help me is by listening actively and sympathetically to what I have to say. A further method of helping me is when my colleague acts as a mirror in order to reflect back my ideas in such a way that I can get a clear view of them.

Edge's *Cooperative Development* was an ideal that I looked up to and tried to make use of in the course of my learning alongside my colleagues (see 5.4.4). It proved useful. However, we still need to go a long way to understand and sustain this vision of human empathy and relatedness.

This study has shown that peers are ideal sources of motivation if the real motive is truly to help, not to control. One extrinsic reward to which I resorted and which proved to be effective is what I have called the "conference incentive" (see 4.5.6.1). As I have pointed out, the majority of participants in this study had not experienced conferences before the project was launched (see 2.5.2.1). I, therefore, made conscious effort to help them get out of their isolation. Availability of funds for teacher education at the ESPC (see 1.4.6.4) motivated and sustained my effort in this regard. The "Conference as catalyst" (Edge and Richards 1993b) of teacher learning is evident in this study. The teachers who sent abstracts became intrinsically motivated to read, attend the TD activities, and carry out AR *before* it was scheduled to start in the CAWRP programme (see 5.3.2). In one of his letters to me in the follow-up stage, Sadik pointed out that only the teachers who participated in the Tunis conference continued to carry out AR. He added:

> There must be some sort of system to push teachers to carry out their first research and help them present it in a conference even if it was costly. Why? because later on you will relax and they will just keep on with no reminder or somebody to push.

There is no research (as far as I know) on the incentive value of conferences in TD (but see K. Richards 1997a for the effect of a collective professional endeavour on EFL teachers and their work culture). What is available instead is some teacher responses reported in professional newsletters published by professional organisations such as IATEFL, TESOL, CARN. Such responses are illuminative of the value of professional conferences as extrinsic sources of motivation. Gill Newton (1989: 13), for example, writes that she has "emerged" from the CARN conference at Cambridge "inspired, motivated and stimulated" because "the ... conference created an atmosphere of sincere commitment and collaboration for a common aim - the benefit of children".

Another kind of extrinsic incentive I would like to point out is what is termed in the literature peer coaching (Showers 1985; Little 1985; Little and McLaughlin 1993); mentoring (Moon 1994); or "role modelling" (Hepworth and Krahnkle 1981). Role modelling manifested in putting the maxim "Practise what you preach" into practice. As we have seen in the formative, summative and follow-up evidence (see 5.4; 5.5; 7.2.3), this was effective in motivating the teachers to work hard and do most of the tasks required of them.

These motivation-related findings have at least three implications for school-based TD. First, real motives behind TD programmes need to be sought out by participants, and it is their right to ask questions about aims and values. This they did in the present study, and I had to explain and illustrate, using theoretical and practical examples (see Appendix 4.14 and section 8.5c, this chapter). Secondly, teacher educators need to face the hard question: "What am I doing here?". Intervention in order to obtain personal gains that do not include similar gains for participants is ethically and morally unjustifiable (see Appleby 1997). Thirdly, conferences or some form of periodic gathering need to be held locally to provide opportunities for EFL teachers to learn from one another and network. Up till the time this study was carried out, these opportunities were not available for the vast majority of teachers in Syria. One aim of my TESOL '98 paper (see Daoud 1998c) was to draw the attention of the USIS's English Language Regional Officer to the fact that Syrian teachers needed

support to attend conferences. She led the colloquium on ESP in the Arab World to which I contributed, and my call appears to have been heeded. The four CAWRP participants who continued doing AR were supported by USIS to participate in different regional and international conferences with papers based on their AR (see 7.2.7).

8.3.6 Reflection and Reflexivity

In the summative interview, Sadik, among others, answered a question that asked about the main lessons he learnt from the CAWRP. Among the lessons he mentioned were reflection and reflexivity:

> [I learnt] ... how to behave in class and outside the class. In the class, I must observe tiny things and write them down and just keep all the time reflecting on how to improve my teaching; outside the class, what things to be discussed with teachers about problems in class. ...

Critical reflection and evaluation, both formative and summative, were highly effective learning tools in the CAWRP (see 3.5.3; 3.5.5; 4.4.5). Reading the literature critically contributed to raising participants' awareness of necessary pedagogical principles and ideas, mainly as a result of group discussion and interaction. This seems to agree with Zeuli's conclusion that "the manner in which teachers read research is inextricably linked to its educative worth" (1994: 42). His study tried to answer the question "How do teachers understand research when they read it?". The findings indicated that "many teachers don't" understand research, and

> When reading research, they were more interested in research products ... [They] were like consumers interested in making decisions about what goods to procure without understanding further *why* the decision is warranted (p. 53).

The problem, he points out, is that "teachers do have specialized knowledge of teaching and no specialised knowledge of research" (p. 53). He argues that reading published research educates teachers only when they read critically and can offer

justifications for their selection of ideas.

Findings of Zeuli's study support the CAWRP approach to critical reading and evaluation of the materials and the ideas embedded in them. This approach has contributed not only to raising awareness of theory and practice, but also to critiquing the ideas with reference to the needs of teachers and students in the local context. In this way the CAWRP proved to be successful in helping the teachers get optimal benefit from the research papers with which they were provided.

This study has shown that teachers' selection of ideas from published research is influenced by the teacher's personal experience of the particular concept or idea (see 5.3.1). The more the teacher was aware of positive instances and experiences similar to the idea expressed in the articles, the more positive she/he was to it and vice versa (see 5.3.3). This agrees with Zueli's observation which states that "teachers are accustomed to judging teaching ideas or strategies in which their main source of validation is their perception of what happens with their students" (Zeuli 1994: 51). I have also found Webb's concept of "horizon" (1996a: 44) useful for interpreting teacher receptivity to the innovative ideas or techniques (see 6.4.2.2). Webb explains:

> Learning is a general kind of human experience, which has much in common with the way Gadamer ... speaks of reading a work as 'an event', a happening that takes place in time, and the meaning of the work for us is a product of the integration of our own present horizon and that of the work.

Teachers' "horizon" includes their beliefs and experiences of the world of teaching and learning. According to Richards (1996b; see also 1998), teachers' beliefs and values ("maxims") are influential and "appear to reflect cultural factors", among other things (abstract). This proved to be the case in this project (see 6.3.2.2; see also Woods 1996). But as we have seen (6.5) and are going to see (8.5), TAR has the potential of challenging teachers' beliefs and values.

Moreover, the proposition that teachers' reflection and critical evaluation of new ideas can facilitate concept formation, which is "essential" for learning to take place (Brown 1990: 92), has proved to be valid in this study (see 6.3.2.2 and 6.4.2.3).

According to Brown:

> Concept formation is dependent upon contact with reality and concepts must have operational meaning ... The formation of concepts leads to 'cognitive strategies' which enable learning to take place faster and more efficiently (*ibid.*).

The implication of these findings and discussion is that teachers need to be encouraged, not forced, to reflect on pedagogical ideas and theories, their beliefs and values, and the context in which their learning and teaching take place. It is the type of questions the researcher-facilitator asks that is the most important in this regard. The "Why?" questions proved to be effective tools for generating teacher reflection and reflexivity in this study, and the facilitator needs to practise what she/he preaches. EFL teachers tend to learn a great deal from mentors or models, people who can genuinely apply the desired behaviour. Rhetoric should match reality or trust and confidence will be lost. TAR is the kind of approach that naturally provides rich reflection opportunities for teachers, regardless of their overload and difficult circumstances. Indeed, it is the hard realities and challenges that teachers face in their day-to-day lives that trigger their reflection and reflexivity most. The findings of this study suggest that teachers who undertake classroom research do not need to be trained to reflect. Classroom data collection and interaction with students and colleagues in the process of research stimulate teacher thinking. Without classroom research, teacher reflection tends to consolidate inherent beliefs and attitudes, leading to little or no change in teaching behaviour.

8.3.7 Ownership

Ownership of the project was undoubtedly one vital factor for its success (see 7.2.7, for example). It is evident in this study that colleagues who felt ownership of the project were strong supporters of innovation and the ones who developed most:

> I would ... say that our work is one: improving our teaching, and that every teacher's work is considered an integral part of that work (Jihad: feedback questionnaire).

Ownership has its values. On the classroom level, focusing on the process meant students rather than their drafts have become the centre of teacher attention (cf. 1.5.; 1.6). Students felt that their opinions and feelings were cared for. Their response to the innovation accelerated as a result, and this, in turn, reflected on their teacher's response and commitment to the innovation. Pennington (1995: 714-15) reports similar effects on eight ethnic Chinese experienced teachers of English in Hong Kong in their attempt to implement process writing:

> The students' positive reaction and achievement came as a pleasant surprise to the teachers ..., and this reaction fueled their-early-stage classroom actions and out-of-class reflections, moving them from an initial focus on what could keep the lesson progressing smoothly ... to a focus on students' responses.

Firestone and Pennell (cited in Pennington 1995: 709) interpret teacher response to the innovation in terms of increased teacher effectiveness and the resulting level of comfort.

In contrast, participants who resisted team writing, implicitly or explicitly, were barriers to change in their classrooms. Pennington and Brock (1996) report similar relationships between teachers' attitude to the innovation (process writing) and their students' evaluation of it. Students who evaluated the innovation positively were taught by the teachers who showed positive attitude to it and vice versa.

Other relationships between input, intake, and personal beliefs and attitudes are reported by Pennington (1996b: 340). Her findings help to shed light and interpret the kind of resistance, attitudes, and reactions experienced in the CAWRP. She writes:

> ... in teacher change, input does not equal intake. Rather, teachers take in only those aspects of the available input which is *accessible* to them. *Accessible input* refers to those types of information to which teachers are prepared to attend because of a high awareness and understanding of the input, coupled with favourable attitudes such as pre-existing interest in or positive attitude towards the form of input or the person giving the input, a strong recognition of a need for input or change or a strong feeling of discomfort at a pre-existing clash of values. In contrast, input for which teachers have low awareness, low understanding, or unfavourable attitudes is *inaccessible* in whole or in part and will consequently have little or no impact in the way of teacher change (italics in original).

In the light of Pennington's findings, it is likely that the three teachers who resisted team writing held values and beliefs different from those held by the principal researcher. This might have influenced their attitudes to the project and its initiator (see 5.2.2.5 and 7.2.2). More probing in follow-up interviews was needed to investigate this issue. This I was unable to do because of the sudden ending of fieldwork.

The implication of this discussion of findings for school-based teacher development programmes is what I have argued for in section 8.3.5 and 8.5c: seeking clarification of real motives and clear definitions of terms early on in the project or as they arise in the research/learning process (see 3.4.2.5). We have the potential to develop these strategies if we are keen on genuine collaboration. It is suggested in the literature that only the administration has the power to establish what is termed a "learning organization", which is characterized by a climate of openness and free discussion (see Senge 1990; and section 3.3.2). According to Weiss (1993: 88), the "organization learns only when it domesticates new knowledge.... The new knowledge has to be *shared*, its meaning for the organization has to be constructed through interactive discourse, and it has to be accepted by a consensus" (italics in original). Such an atmosphere of sharing and openness is particularly needed in the context of language education, and the reason is that teaching a foreign language involves "a fusion of two cultures" (Jackson and Price 1981). It also entails the involvement of cognitive and emotional factors (Stern 1983a; Brown 1994).

8.3.8 Involvement and Participation

Involvement and participation were basic strategies in the project design and methodology (see 4.4.2; 4.5.2). One priority was to encourage colleagues' involvement in the project and to delegate the main responsibility of development to them (see 4.3.2). Moreover, my participatory role indicated to them that I was there to learn with them. They appeared to have appreciated this approach:

> The way you did it was indirect and attractive at the same time. ... You introduced us to the idea of research. ... I never dreamt that I could do such a thing ... Two or three

> weeks later you came up with the idea of sending abstracts to Tunisia. It was shocking for me! I couldn't imagine myself ... I couldn't believe it. ... These stages prepared us psychologically and professionally. ... (Sadik: Summative interview).

The implication is that the role of the colleague researcher/facilitator is vital and need be participatory in order to be credible and effective. Similarly, project participants should be allowed space and power to influence the study and shape its outcome. This adds to its strengths and credibility and helps to overcome its shortcomings and limitations, as Nunan points out:

> One of the greatest benefits of involving others collaboratively in our research concerns is that it helps us identify and, hopefully, overcome the limitations of our own ways of thinking, acting, and reacting (Nunan 1989a: 116).

8.3.9 Interaction and Dialogue

Sadik and Ola had little time left for discussing the findings of their piloting of "peer reviews" with colleagues (see 5.3.2). The short exchange that followed their presentation was nevertheless illustrative of the value of interaction for teacher learning:

> **Ola:** One thing I want to mention is that students learn from one another through language. The only problem in our case is that students try to speak Arabic most of the time, and we want them to discuss things in English.
> **Sadik:** That's why communication was incomplete.
> **Director:** This is something very common in EFL contexts in general.
> **Noor:** Students lack ideas when they write on general topics.
> **Sadik:** Push them. ... Sit them together and let them discuss.
> **Sada**: The findings of this pilot study agree with the findings of a study in Canada. ... It was found that international students focused on surface errors, unlike native speakers, who focused more on content. Perhaps this relates to teaching methodology. ... We tend to focus on surface errors.
> **Jihad and Noor** (simultaneously): Yes, yes.

Six teachers out of 16 took part in this brief exchange. If we analyse it, we can find that several things took place, indicating the value of teacher-teacher interaction in the

context of professional learning:

- highlighting the main problem faced by the teacher-researchers (Ola and Sadik);
- situating the problem (Director and Sada);
- analysing the problem (Noor);
- suggesting explicit/implicit "solutions" (Sadik and Sada);
- endorsing the suggestion (Jihad and Noor).

Interaction was a powerful means of TD and classroom innovation in this study (see 3.3.1.3; 3.5.5.4; 4.4.4). It was the vehicle of reflection that led us to challenge some of our beliefs and values. From the moment of its inception till the time the write up was completed (see 7.2.7), the CAWRP was truly interactive (see Huberman 1993b). Almost all our interaction was carried out in English. This is particularly important in the context of language learning (see van Lier 1996). Additionally, interaction proved to be helpful not only at moments of harmony but more importantly at times of stress, tension, and conflict, which are characteristic of innovation and change. Heyl (1997: 3-4) stresses the importance of "talking" and "listening" in "creating intimate moments" and transcending people's differences in collaborative fieldwork (see 4.5.6 and 7.2.6).

A good deal of research has been done to substantiate the value of interaction, focusing on student learning (see, e.g., Pica and Doughty 1985; Freedman and Katz 1987; Nunan 1996a; van Lier 1996). Comparatively, little is available to substantiate this role in teacher learning (see K. Richards 1996 and 1999). Hopefully, this study will stimulate more research in this area.

The implications are clear: we need to create opportunities for interaction and time for intimate moments in the workplace. The discussion circles, oral presentations, and the collaborative AR workshop proved to be appropriate operational strategies.

8.4 Aspirations

Now that TAR has been institutionalized at the ESPC, something needs to be done within the Centre to promote the idea and extend our experience and knowledge to help colleagues in similar contexts in Syria and elsewhere. The following practical recommendations are future aspirations, things the ESPC, through the commitment of its staff and teacher-researchers, can attempt to achieve at the country's level in the short and long terms:

a) Publicity: The idea of TAR can be promoted through organising a symposium or conference under the title "Teacher-Initiated Action Research". The ESPC with help from the University can arrange for such a gathering. Papers, theoretical and practical, can be given to promote the idea. Native speaker colleagues can be invited to contribute, too. Perhaps a future plan can be hammered out for collaborative projects that can involve the three Centres (see 1.3.2) and their teachers in ways similar to the "language inservice progamme for teachers (LIPT)" described by Burton and Mickan (1993). The LIPT runs annually in south Australia. It has a community structure consisting of (a) steering committee; (b) project team (consultants, coordinator, officers, evaluator); (c) facilitators; and finally (d) teacher participants. Since the ESPC has a leading role in the ELT/ESP scene in Syria, it can also play a vital role in promoting the idea of TAR through local newsletters, newspapers, radio and television, etc.

b) University-based AR projects: At the time this study was carried out there was very little cooperation between the parties concerned with TD (see 1.3.2). There is a need for University-based projects and more cooperation and collaboration on different levels. Training can be provided at the ESPC for facilitators who can supervise AR projects at university or school levels. ELT professionals can carry out AR in the manner done in the CAWRP. USIS and the British Council can perhaps be approached

for expert and material support and for providing some kind of training for AR consultants, coordinators, and facilitators in the UK and USA. Pennington (1996b), among others (see Nunan 1993), writes about the role and importance of "collaborative action research between secondary and tertiary institutions" in providing "'vertical' and abstract learning through mentoring by someone at a higher academic level" (p. 321). The concepts of "critical friend" and "critical community" (3.5.3) have been employed with a good rate of success in the CAWRP. These concepts need to be made use of, if possible, in the wider context, to unite our efforts and make our voice heard inside and outside Syria, in the ELT world (see next aspiration).

c) Networking: ELT professionals in Syria are generally isolated. We need to establish a professional organization, similar to MATE in Morocco or TESOL Arabia in the United Arab Emirates, and link with other regional and international organizations like IATEFL and TESOL. The ESPC can play a vital role in establishing such networking. Its Director is an influential figure in the administrative hierarchy and can, I believe, contribute to negotiating the establishment of such a professional organisation. Burton and Mickan (1993: 118-119) mention "network groups ... of between four and eight participants ... run by facilitators ..., who were given prior training in the inservice concept and opportunities to extend their knowledge and experience of action research". These ideas can be adapted and experimented with in our context.

d) Distance learning: One aspiration of several participants in this study is to get a higher degree from a British University (see 7.2.7). At present, this is beyond the means of the majority of teachers. Perhaps ways can be found to link with a university that will provide distance learning materials and support with an intermediary role from local consultants. At present, many British universities are involved in providing such service (see Richards and Roe 1994). Action research can be used for a dual purpose in distance learning: TD and academic accreditation. This might entail challenges (see Richards 1994), but it is always worth trying new ideas. Otherwise little or no change

would take place.

e) Teacher education: In the near future a diploma course in ESP teaching will be established at the ESPC, Damascus University, with support from the European Commission (see 1.4.6.4). Academic writing needs to be integrated with other curriculum components in such a diploma course. Small-scale AR projects can be carried out by trainees in order to induct them early on in classroom research methodology and writing (see Altman 1983; Schultz and Yinger 1984; Andrews 1987). Such integration would be educative and enriching to the Syrian EFL/ESP trainee teachers in the light of novice teachers' compelling achievements in the CAWRP (see Wallace 1996 and 1998; and Medgyes and Ryan 1996 for similar initiatives).

A second benefit that can be put to use immediately in our future ESP teacher education programme is the use of case studies like those of Noor and Sadik (and others that I intend to publish in the future) as learning tools. Reality-based case studies have recently been argued for by Jackson (1998), who points out the need to reach ESP practitioners everywhere:

> In order for this pedagogy to become widely used and accepted, ... it is imperative that experienced ESP practitioners document their experiences through cases and make these 'windows on practice' accessible to others. Let's take ESP practice out of the closet (p. 163).

A third contribution of this study to future ESP teacher education in Syria (and perhaps elsewhere) relates to teacher educators. Out of the six Centre teachers who were involved in staff development or selected to be trainers on the coming postgraduate ESP teacher education course in Syria (see 1.4.6.4), only two did AR and introduced classroom innovation (Jihad and Noor). Experience of this project has shown that it is necessary for teacher educators to be researchers and innovators themselves. How can one help others to change and develop if one does not apply this to oneself? Secondly, we have seen in this study the role peer motivation plays in energising latent capacities (see 4.5.6.1). One central characteristic of a teacher-trainer

or a TD facilitator is the ability to motivate people (see 8.6.1 for more discussion).

f) Publication and other incentives: In order to encourage and share TAR reports, a kind of publication forum is necessary. This can take the form of edited books, conference proceedings or newsletters. Interesting and instructive case studies can be used in TD programmes, as Jackson (1998) suggests. Depending on their experience and evaluation of the LIPT inservice programme in South Australia, Burton and Mickan (1993: 121) write about teacher-non-researchers' response to reading teacher-researchers' reports and the benefits they gained from them. Moreover, promotion and other ways of encouragement (i.e., conference grants) can be used to motivate teachers to carry out AR.

8.5 My Personal Learning

The lessons I have learnt through participating in this project and facilitating teacher and student learning are numerous. This section throws light on seven of them.

a) Initial and subsequent reflections: This study was based on critical and intensive reflection on 17 years of teaching experience, five of which were at the ESPC (see Appendix 8.1). Before I started my fieldwork, I believed I knew a great deal about the context and its people. I discovered that I knew very little, particularly about the potential for change and development. There is still a great deal to learn, and I do believe now that Syrian English language teachers can make real contribution to the field. TAR has helped in launching latent capacities. An ethnographic AR approach to facilitating TAR has proved to be successful in such a context. Success or failure unfolds in the field itself, and it is people and their intentions that make things happen. This study has created intimate moments and generated invaluable self-awareness and friendships. These are valuable achievements, I believe.

b) Vigilance, rigour, and joy: The field "is the meeting point, if not the battlefield" of

theory, practice, research, and reality, "the pragmatic moment of the truth" (Maley 1991: 24). The researcher should be vigilant and sensitive, and "rigor and joy" (see Freire 1972) are not incompatible in fieldwork (see Coleman 1987). Both are needed in action research (van Lier 1996) because it involves change, which is stressful to all, researcher and researched. So a "pedagogy of hope" (Wink 1998) is needed both in the classroom and in staff meetings. In other words, opportunities for humour need to be seized and made use of for the psychological well-being of all participants. These were numerous in the course of this study and might have indirectly contributed to its success. Humour in the CAWRP was mostly based on surprising discoveries made by teachers in the process of their AR. These will provide rich subject for future publications to add to the field of TD (see K. Richards 1996 on the theme of humour in collaborative school cultures).

c) The researcher as learner: I started the Main Phase with the optimistic view that colleagues who had committed themselves freely to the project in its Baseline Phase would fulfill their promises. When I started my fieldwork I was shocked to find out that none of what had been agreed to be accomplished before fieldwork would start was done, apart from scheduling the activities over a timeline that itself could not be adhered to. Problems of every sort confronted me, initially, (see 4.3.1 and 4.5.6), and I had to decide whether to go on or opt out. The decision was to "go ahead". Anxiety and uncertainty amongst some staff regarding the real aims of the study were challenging. I was asked to (again) "establish the field" and spell out the aims of the project. This motivated me to articulate the aims of my study in as clear terms as possible (see Appendices 4.13 and 4.14). This contributed a great deal to my development in ways similar to what one principal researcher in Huberman's multi-site study has put it:

> When you have to discuss, explain and illustrate your study, then answer to their (practitioners') criticism, you end up understanding more about your study (Huberman 1993b: 48).

d) Teacher or researcher? The biggest shock of all was when the Director asked me to stop my teaching and hand over to Reem, my course partner. This happened upon our return from Tunis, ten days before the end-of-course examination. It was a difficult decision: "How can I leave my students without saying good-bye to them?" "What will they think if I left them at the time they need me most without explaining why I have to leave them?" (classroom Diary). Tens of questions rushed to my mind while holding my students' drafts and wondering whether I should see them for a final farewell. It was an emotional experience. I was deeply upset, frustrated, and disappointed. I wished I had never received a scholarship to do a PhD, the biggest dream in my life. I forgot that I was a researcher while walking towards the classroom that witnessed "moments" of great pleasure and satisfaction for a whole course. Reem, my course partner and classroom co-researcher, was with the students. She was not surprised to see me nor were the students because we had agreed that she would give me one hour of her Core session to go over my comments with some students, and the students were informed about this make-up class. I explained to my students what happened and regretted that I was unable to help them write their "References" section and supervise the final write up of their APPs. I expressed confidence in their ability and in Reem's competence to help them finalise the task. Reem seemed upset upon hearing my brief story. A close collegial relationship had developed between her and me as a result of our working together on one research project. She rushed towards the door, wanting to leave. I stopped her and told her that the Director told me to hand over to her; so she should stay with the students. The students observed and listened to me silently, not knowing what to say. From my experience working with them for a whole course, I knew they admired me as a teacher. I tried to scan their faces for the last time and take the last print in my mind. But the faces were mixed up and I was unable to see through my suppressed tears. I remember myself uttering: "I love you all and wish you a successful examination". This broke their silence and their voices came together loud and clear: "We love you; we love you". I felt I had received the reward my research was after. I was happy and extremely miserable (based on Classroom Diary: 5/3/1997).

e) Action research *or* action researchers? By the end of my study, I have come to agree with Jean McNiff (1992: 1) that "there's no such thing as action research - only action researchers". As Moira Laidlaw (*ibid.*) says, "it is in the doing of something ... in ... trying to understand your own practice and improving it for the benefit of your own self improvement and the people with whom you are working that you actually understand what action research is". Action researchers as I see them now are those who can make things happen through their commitment and humility. Humility is a key characteristic of action researchers. It has been defined as "a form of inner strength, a kind of dignity that makes it less necessary for a person to pretend" (Jersild 1955:96). A humble person is "one who is ... a good listener" (*ibid.*: 98). She/he "can tolerate himself not only as one whose knowledge is imperfect but also one who himself is imperfect" (*ibid.*: 99).

f) Constraints on TAR: My action research has changed my perspective of "constraints", too. Before and during the implementation of this project I used to see many contextual factors as constraining to TAR: course time, administrative rules and regulations, lack of material resources, etc. Now I see them as resources. In action research, challenges and conflicts are real resources for action. They stimulate creativity, which is necessary for moving things forward. Patience and persistence are personal resources that are invaluable in collaborative AR in order to achieve progress.

g) The power and danger of writing: "The power of the pen is indeed mighty," writes McNiff (1990: 58). This study has broadened and deepened my view of writing. I relied on it extensively to communicate with busy colleagues, and the power of my pen appeared to have generated their trust and feeling of security. In addition, writing the thesis has contributed to deepening my understanding of writing as a powerful reflective and educative tool in ways similar to McNiff's experience (1990: 57). However, as McNiff (*ibid.*) puts it, the danger lies in the view that research writing is permanent "truth" rather than a provisional reflection of the mind and a forum for

debate (p.58). Action researchers do not try to provide answers, but attempt to pose questions and try to open ways for moving forward. Life-long learning to meet new demands and arising needs is their main strategy for living their values in their practice.

8.6 Significance and Limitations

8.6.1 Significance

The significance of this study appears in the discussion of its findings (section 8.3) and in my personal learning as teacher, teacher facilitator, and action researcher (section 8.5). Attributes of its success need to be tested and evaluated by other researchers in other contexts In this section, I highlight some important points and try to throw some light on the role of the teacher-facilitator, indicating a few wider implications that can be of use to future researchers:

- The initiative for intervention and change has come from the grassroots, the teachers;
- The TD project has been planned, designed, implemented, and evaluated by the teachers in one institution consciously and overtly without outside interference;
- The project has built on previous studies by the same researcher in the same context, one leading to the other in a progressive manner;
- A high rate of success has been achieved in terms of teacher participation and involvement;
- The participants' evaluation and suggestions have been taken care of and implemented immediately, leading to continuity and sustainability;
- Teacher development and pedagogic innovation have gone hand in hand guided by principles that apply to both;
- Teacher-initiated classroom innovation (team writing) has taken root and become

institutionalised in the desired manner (i.e., optional); and

- An intimate relationship has developed between the researcher and researched as a result of working together for a common purpose.

What is the role of the teacher-facilitator in these aspects of the study? The answer has emerged in the voices of the participants, indicating that the teacher-researcher/facilitator's role is important. Experience of this project has shown that the following factors have contributed to my ability to support my colleagues and myself to achieve:

- knowledge and experience of the research context;
- long experience of teaching English in the system at large;
- education in the target language community and time off for study, reflection, and academic and professional socialisation;
- colleagues' and students' support and encouragement; and
- personal characteristics.

First, the whole project design was based on context knowledge, previous experience in research, particularly on writing, and educaction (inservice training) in the target language community. I think these three elements are necessary and that they have contributed in significant and different ways to project success. My education in the UK in particular was instrumental in generating my self-confidence and, in a similar vein, participants' confidence in my knowledge and ability to help. The baseline study was the basis on which this success was built. It gave me deep insight into students' and teachers' needs and potentials and enlightened me about context variables and challenges. This urged me to read more, attend conferences and seminars, and reach out for advice from different sources. Secondly, all this preparation and knowledge would have been worthless had it not been for colleagues' support. The majority, both experienced and novice, including those who showed some resistance later, were

receptive to the project idea. Appendix 8.2 shows a visual representation of our learning journey.

Thirdly, students were an invaluable source of support in this study. My classroom AR in collaboration with Reem (Appendix 6.1) has empowered me with knowledge about my students and their subject areas through feedback and animated discussion. Teaching sustained my energy and gave me enormous power to go on (see Schratz 1993; Torres 1993; McGinity 1993; Nakhoul 1993; and Jenkins 1993 for other teacher-researchers' accounts). The Student Questionnaire that did not have the chance of fulfilling its aims at the Centre level was distributed in my class to discover the extent of my development and the effect of this development on my students. The data generated are enlightening about the reciprocal relationship between teacher and student development. My classroom study helped me to discover my strengths and build on them and pin point my weaknesses and try to tackle them with the support of collaborative colleagues, my mirrors.

One strength that has emerged in the Student Questionnaire data in my class is the teacher's ability to motivate students. Several questions in the Questionnaire (Appendix 4.8) aimed at investigating teacher role. One asked "In what way(s) does your teacher help you in the process of APP writing (i.e., your teacher's role as you see it)?". The learners were given the freedom of responding in Arabic or English in order to get their answers unprohibited by language ability. Students were almost unanimous in indicating the potential of their APP teacher as a motivator. One example is that of a student who was constantly top of her class in her undergraduate university courses, but nevertheless felt "hopeless" at the start of the ESP course because of her perception of herself as "weak" in English, "the biggest obstacle in my life," as she put it:

> I can't describe my APP teacher's role. She gave me a lot. She re-installed in me the self-confidence I had lost at the start of the course. She helped in improving my language and gave me the courage to use English in talking to her and to my classmates. Whenever I see her, I see the glimmer of success ... (Student Questionnaire; translated).

Several students of mine in previous courses expressed similar end-of-course

responses. Initially, they believed they were hopeless language learners but were shown that they *were not*. One other example is of a medical student who sent a letter after the course had ended, saying among other things:

> Frankly, I used to hate English. There was a psychological barrier between me and this language whenever I came into contact with it. Your encouragement and guidance were able to break this barrier and for ever. ... (translated).

The implications are clear. Teachers who are unable to motivate their students should not be selected as TD facilitators or teacher educators. This is of more importance in the context of adult learning, particularly language learning, because of the personal, affective, and cultural variables involved in this enterprise (Adams Smith 1986; Harvey 1986; Williams and Burden 1997). Being able to motivate people is an essential quality in ESP teaching and should be emphasised in both teacher education and management courses. My success as a facilitator can be attributed mainly to this strength. Other personal characteristics that enhanced this basic quality are patience, tolerance, persistence, and, above all, commitment to the learners, our hope of a better world.

It needs to be emphasised that rich data were collected in the course of this study in both its Baseline and Main Phases and at two levels: TD and classroom innovation. Sticking to its main focus in writing up the research report meant extracting only what was relevant to the research questions. The data that remained can be a useful resource for numerous papers on TD and classroom innovation, mostly in the form of illustrative case studies of teachers and learners. These can serve as educative tools in ESP teacher education programmes (see 8.4e and 4.3.6).

Moreover, this study enjoys a high rate of internal validity because it relied extensively on ongoing critical formative and summative evaluation by its participants and on regular reporting of its findings to the participants and the teacher and research community at different conferences in the region and beyond it (see Daoud 1996c, 1997b, 1997c, 1998b, 1998c, 1998d, 1998e, 1999).

As for external validity, the overall design and methodology of this study are, I

believe, generalisable and transferable to similar ESP contexts (see Chapter 4). They can be modified and added to in ways appropriate to contexts of use and their priorities. Moreover, TAR of this type (first- and second-order) has other wider implications, as Burton and Mickan (1993: 121) argue:

> The outcomes of teachers' ... research widen the research agenda to include questions and issues for professional researchers which have import for language teachers. Teachers' ... research points to critical issues for a research agenda, and at the same time offers the opportunity to test and critique the results of academic research in different contexts.

In a recent plenary paper at IATEFL, Rod Ellis (1998: 15) argues similar points to those expressed by Burton and Mickan. He sees different kinds of needs existing in current approaches to research in the field of teaching and teacher education:

1. The need for researchers to participate with teachers in teaching, not merely observe them;
2. an acceptance of the teacher's 'voice', not the researcher's vision, should be the starting point of an enquiry;
3. the importance of establishing a long-term relationship between teacher and researcher; and
4. the need to establish a partnership of equality.

All four principles of participatory research, which Ellis argues for, are clear in the present study.

Overall, whether the findings of a study are generalisable to other contexts or not is not currently viewed as problematic. In an interesting critical review of "ethnographic approaches and methods in L2 writing research", Ramanathan and Atkinson (1999: 56) observe that

> ... there are approaches to knowledge whose route is through the understanding of particularity rather than the direct pursuit of the generalizable. Such approaches should not necessarily be viewed, however, as diametrically opposed to or incommensurable with more traditionally positivistic ones, but rather as having a different (or at least differently ordered) set of *accountabilities* (emphasis in original).

The authors term researchers' commitment to the particular as "particularisability" and stress the point that:

> Central to the goals of most ethnographic research is what Geertz (1973: ch. 1) has called 'thick description' - analysis which aims to capture some of the complex uniqueness that characterizes every cultural scene, and from the perspectives of the social actors involved in the scene themselves. (*ibid.*).

"Some of the complex uniqueness that characterizes" the ESPC as an EFL/ESP institution responsible for teacher and student development can be claimed to have been captured in this study through "thick description" and from the perspectives of the research participants.

8.6.2 Limitations

This study, like any other, has its limitations. They are mainly oversights, misunderstandings, and conflicts that have resulted from people having different views of the world, different backgrounds, different interests, and different ideologies and agendas. These need to be looked at constructively so that understanding of their causes and effects will provide resources for future projects and further learning. They centre in three main areas:

- definition of terms
- ethical dilemmas
- project evaluation

In my last (recorded) meeting with her, the Centre Director answered a question about the CAWRP's success or failure. Her answer summed up the main challenges that faced the project:

> I think it has been a success. But it has caused administrative problems, and this is because of the different views of the world between the researcher and the administrator. (30 January 1997)

The Centre Director has identified the source of what is termed "conflict" in interventionist research (see Holliday 1994). She and I appeared to have much in common, but we also had different perspectives on a number of matters. Many of these had not been anticipated prior to fieldwork but arose in the research process. For example, we had different views of what AR meant. In her view, the action researcher should have planned everything in advance: ("You can't come to me one day before the exam and say you want to observe the APP interviews; this should have been planned well in advance"). My perspective was different: there was a general framework that guided the study but that needed to be revisited and modified in the light of the research findings. Such differences in our understanding of the nature of AR (among other terms) led to heated arguments between her and me in office meetings. I looked at these debates as natural and enriching in the course of "our" learning, but they were a "deficiency in gaining access techniques on the researcher's side" in the Director's eyes. She asked me to mention this weakness of mine in my research report so that future researchers would learn from my mistakes.

To learn from this resource, I suggest that future researchers should discuss and agree with their research participants on the definition of basic terms involved in a particular research project, e.g., "action research", "collaboration", "participation", "teaching", "consultant", "supervisor", etc. This can save a good deal of time, particularly in ESP contexts, where time is a scarce resource (Swales 1989 and 1990).

Ethical dilemmas are challenging in an AR approach to TD. Hopkins (1993) states that teachers' basic job is teaching, and any research that interferes with teaching is unethical. Two ethical dilemmas faced me in implementing the CAWRP, and I failed to deal with them. The first relates to the Director and I having some differences about having two projects run at the same time. Being an insider teacher- action researcher, I voiced my view early on in the Main Phase, saying that burdening the already overloaded teachers with two demanding projects was unethical and predicted that one or both projects would ultimately fail because the teachers would not be able to cope.

On the basis of this, I urged her to consider putting the Material Evaluation Project (MEP) off till the third trimester, promising to end the CAWRP by then (two months earlier than originally agreed). Her perspective was different:

> I don't think the same teachers are doing both. Some of them might be doing both. We made a point of doing all the preparation, all the workshops for the MEP, before you came. All they have to do now is to apply what they have learnt. (recorded office meeting)

As I predicted, the teachers were unable to cope with two projects, and the majority selected the optional one. This might explain the Director's statement that the project "has caused administrative problems". These could have been avoided with some degree of flexibility and tolerance of the teachers' selection of their course of action.

Looking at this problem and reflecting on its consequences from a distance in the course of my final data analysis, I came to realise the extent the MEP benefited the CAWRP. The workshops the Director and her Evaluation Coordinator ran to prepare teachers theoretically to select course materials and evaluate them increased the CAWRP participants' knowledge of the Centre courses. They had to go over students' needs, course objectives, the old materials, etc. and evaluate them. The ten workshops run for this purpose in the first trimester of the academic year, just before the Main Phase of the CAWRP started, prepared the teachers well for critical evaluation of the CAWRP materials and methodology and gave them deep insight into students' needs as stated in the curriculum and into problems and potentials. This awareness on their part fed into their evaluation of the CAWRP research articles and the relevance of the ideas embedded in them to their students and the Centre as a whole. The Director and her Evaluation Coordinator deserve credit for their colleagues' achievement in the CAWRP. This is the reason I am arguing that some of the "constraints" on the CAWRP turned out to be real resources that speeded the pace of the teachers' awareness and critical reflection and evaluation, and, hence, their development.

The second ethical dilemma was of more serious consequence. It relates to

stopping my teaching ten days before my students' end-of-course examination. This sudden and unexpected decision affected the students, other colleagues and me and generated a heated debate at the Centre. In a staff meeting that I was not allowed to attend (because it was "an internal affair", according to the Director), some CAWRP full participants raised ethical points and drew attention to negative attitudes underlying them (see Wildman and Niles 1987; see also Whitehead 1993 on his theory of "living contradictions" and the notions of "truth of power" and "power of truth"). As I gathered from colleagues' informal reports, most negative attitudes to the project were expressed by non- or occasional participants. Such staff reactions are reported in some AR projects in the UK (see Somekh 1989 on "Nowhere School", for example) and need not be looked at negatively, as they are natural in the context of TD and innovation. Focusing on the process requires quality discussion and constructive critique of issues and values (see White 1998). These bring us nearer to what Fullan and Hargreaves describe as "collaborative school cultures", where debate and argument are intense and frequent (see 8.3.4).

The third limitation of the study relates to the project evaluation. Because of the strain and stress we worked under, I was unable to reflect sufficiently on the best method to get summative feedback on the whole project. Since it was collaborative in nature and since its evaluation was ongoing during implementation, the summative evaluation should have been placed in the hands of an independent committee of members of staff selected by a majority. This idea did not occur to me at the time. Embarking on designing questionnaires for staff and student evaluation of the project without consultation with the Director and other colleagues might have harmed the project and speeded its arrest. This was an oversight that could have been avoided with deeper reflection on my part (see Newton 1993 on evaluation of inservice). It is my hope that teacher researchers who read this thesis will learn from my errors and oversights in designing and implementing their projects.

In summary, then, my personal learning was substantial and will enable me in future projects to work more effectively on the personal, group, classroom, and institutional levels.

8.7 ... And Teacher Learning Continues.

This thesis has documented and demonstrated the value of TAR for teacher development and classroom innovation as a result of teacher learning. In this chapter I have tried to bring together the main strands of a teacher "story": the research motivation and context; approach, design and methodology; questions and findings; and the beliefs and values that have influenced the study, including those that have been challenged, modified, or changed by action and reflection. Success of the project has been attributed mainly to the commitment and hard work of its participants, who were guided by selected methodological principles and strategies. These include relevance, feedback, freedom, collaboration, motivation, reflection, reflexivity, involvement, participation, and interaction. Some practical recommendations have been put forward for promoting collaborative TAR and networking. The main lessons that have been learnt from this study and its contributions and limitations have also been pointed out.

The study has contributed constructively to easing the problems which it aimed at tackling. In the process of doing so, however, other problems that were unseen emerged. These need to be addressed by future AR projects. Thus, the journey of teacher learning continues more rigorously and systematically than before, as all the parties have increased in knowledge of research, theory, and practice in the process of TAR. As the write up of the thesis was being completed, news came from the Centre that the four active action researchers were participating in regional and international conferences with papers based on their new AR projects. So the life-long learning project, of which the CAWRP was the launching start, goes on, and teachers' stories keep evolving and improving in quality and richness.

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EFL/ESP Teacher Development and Classroom Innovation through Teacher-Initiated Action Research

Two Volumes

Volume 2
(Appendices)

by

Sada Ahmad Daoud

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English Language Teaching

University of Warwick, Centre for English Language Teacher Education

September 1999

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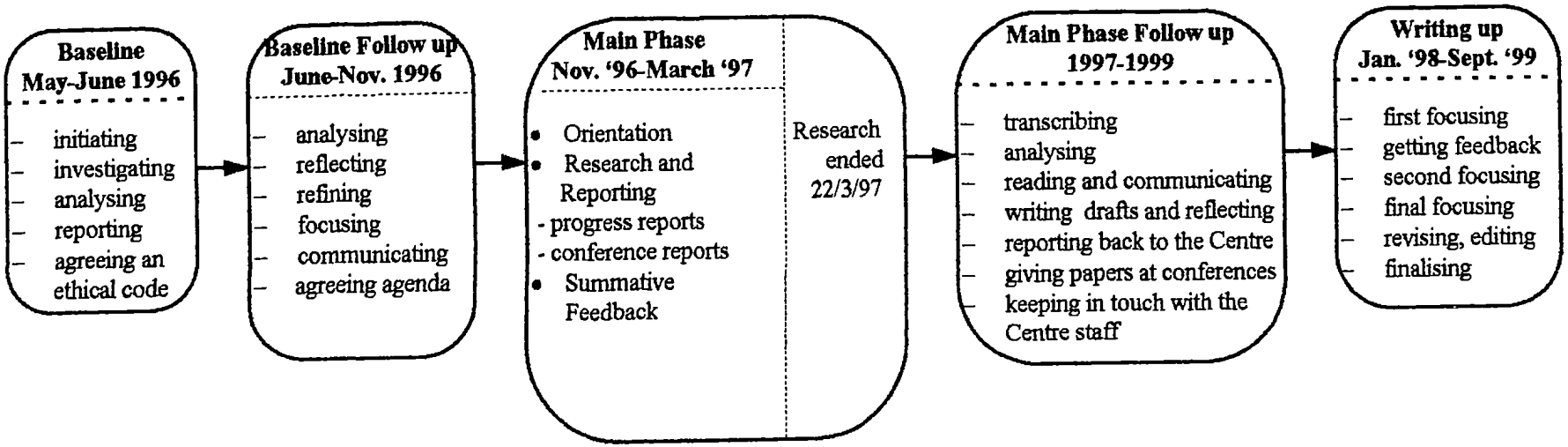
Appendix 1.1 Timeline of the PhD Study by Sada Ahmad Daoud



Appendix 1.2

A Sample MA Course Syllabus

MA COURSE SYLLABUS
SCI/TEC

COMP/ WEEK	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
C O R E	U-2		U-3		U-4		U-5			U-6	
	Writing Conventions		CVs; Letters		Using Word Form.		NVDs			IDR-1	
											(8 hours/week)
P P & O P	44 hours: 10 wks for PP + last 2 wks for OP										(4 hours/week)
S O C	THE NEW CAMBRIDGE ENGLISH COURSE B2/ B 3 (Swan,M. & Walter,C.)										(6 hours/week)
L A B	CAMBRIDGE SKILLS FOR FLUENCY B.2 (Adrian Doff & Carolyn Becket) (weeks 1 - 11, one unit/week)										(2 hours/week)

Trim. II, 1996 - 1997 ma-sy-st/AS

Appendix 1.3

Early Project Proposal

May 1996

Aims

The research I intend to carry out at the ESP Centre is in the area of teacher development. It aims at finding answers to the following questions:

1. What is the present situation of teacher academic and professional development programmes at the ESPC with particular reference to teaching/learning academic writing?

2. To what extent and for what reason(s) does collaboration succeed in improving and enhancing the professional and academic situation of writing teachers at the Centre?

3. What are the implications for EFL/ESP teacher and curriculum development programmes in EFL/ESP Third World contexts?

Place of Research

ESP Centre (ESPC), Damascus University, Syria.

Research Time-scale

I intend to carry out this research project over three phases, each of which has its own aims and timeline:

1. Baseline research (May-June 1996);
2. Implementation and main data gathering and analysis phase (January 1997-August 1997); and
3. Writing up phase (September 1997-September 1998).

The Baseline Phase

This phase aims at:

1. investigating the viability and relevance of the research topic to the context of research;
2. negotiating access to sources of data (mainly documents and teachers);

3. collecting baseline data; and
4. agreeing with the participants on the timing and ethics of the collaborative project.

The Collaborative TD Project

Background

It has been found out by previous research at the ESPC (Daoud 1995), Damascus University, that writing teachers and their students work under considerable constraints, particularly time, and that this is having great impact on teacher development. It is suggested in the literature that teacher action research, particularly the collaborative type, can ease these constraints and enhance teacher and curriculum development. Two of the recommendations that have been made to ease the time constraint and, hence, improve the professional situation of writing teachers, are "team" or "collaborative" writing of projects (as an alternative to individual writing) and mentoring, a form of collaboration between experienced and novice teachers.

The present research project aims at investigating the practicality of these two recommendations by implementing them in practice. The form that implementation will take place follows what is recommended in action research methodology, which stresses the importance of testing hypothetical innovations before introducing changes in the curriculum or teacher development programmes.

Though the recommendations were made with medical science courses in mind, this research project aims at investigating the practicality or otherwise of the ideas in other courses (Sci-Tec and Hum) as well. Teachers, two at least (preferably experienced and novice), from each course would collaborate to investigate different aspects of team writing. They meet periodically to exchange notes (i.e. their research findings) and decide on the next step in the action research spiral, and so on till the end of the course.

Appendix 2.1

Introduction Letter and Interview Consent Form

May 1996

Dear Colleagues,

First, let me introduce myself to those of you who do not know me. I am an ESPC teacher currently studying for my Ph.D. in Britain. I joined the Centre in 1989.

At present I am collecting baseline data for my research project. At this stage, I am interested in investigating teachers' views concerning different aspects of teaching and learning academic writing, the Academic Project Paper (APP) in particular. I need to meet you individually for this purpose and should be very grateful if you would agree to be interviewed.

The time, date, and place of the interview will be arranged through consultation with you personally after I receive your consent.

All your interview responses will be treated with confidentiality and anonymity.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Sada A. Daoud

Name: ----------

Telephone number: ----------

Do you agree to be interviewed?

❒ Yes ❒ No

Date of interview: ----------

Time of interview: ----------

Place of interview: ----------

Appendix 2.2

Baseline Teacher Interview Questions

Introduction

Thank you very much for agreeing to be interviewed. My aim is to find out what you think concerning different issues that concern us as ESP teachers in relation to learning and teaching writing, particularly the APP component, and our own development in this area as well. Your answers to the questions will suggest ways for dealing with problems that face us in learning and teaching this component. Your responses will be treated with strict confidentiality and anonymity.

A. Personal and Professional Profiles

First, I want to get some personal data. This does not need recording. I'll take notes.

Name:----------

1. Age group: 22-32 33-43 44-54 55+
2. Sex: Female Male
3. Academic qualification:
   a. BA
   b. Diploma
   c. MA
   d. PhD
4. Where and for how long did you teach English before you joined the ESPC?
5. What age group did you teach then and what did you teach?
6. How long have you been teaching at the ESPC?
7. What course(s) and components have you taught at the ESPC and for how long?

Course(s)	Component(s)	Length of experience
a. Med		
b. Sci-Tec		
c. Hum.		
d. Prof.		
e. TAs		
f. Other (please specify)		

8. What components do you teach at present?
9. How many contact hours a week do you have?
10. How many students do you teach?
11. On average, how much out of class time do you currently spend on each student's APP homework a week?
12. Do you do any additional job besides your work at the Centre? If yes, how many hours/wk? Why do you do additional work?

B. Attitude to and Experience in Learning and Teaching Writing

Learning writing

1. Could you please tell me your story of learning to write in English starting with your school years and ending with your college years. Specifically,
   a. When did you start and how?
   b. What did you learn to write?
   c. How did you learn/ or how were you taught writing (i.e., the method)?
   d. What did you feel about learning writing, and why?
   e. Did this feeling change from year to year or from stage to stage? If yes, how did it change? And for what main reason(s)?
   f. Did your feeling towards learning writing in English match that in Arabic?

2. Generally speaking, how would you rate yourself as a writer in English when
   a. at school?
   b. at college?

3. Have you learnt more about writing since graduation? How?

Teaching writing

4. What do you like and dislike about teaching writing at the ESP Centre?
5. Among the different ESP components (Core, Social, Lab), where does the APP component stand, given you have the freedom to choose what to teach (first, second, etc.)? Why?
6. How would you rate yourself as a teacher of writing in general (excellent, very good, good, etc.)?
7. Do you prefer to teach general writing skills (e.g. writing paragraphs and essays on general topics) or the specific types (e.g., the APP)? Why?

Students

8. What about your students' level in writing?
9. (If the teacher believes there are hopeless cases) What do you do to help these students?

C. Conceptual Knowledge and Awareness of Writing Methodology

1. Generally speaking, what approach to teaching the APP is followed at the Centre? (For example, is it process, product, genre, content, etc.?)
2. Why is this approach (whatever the teacher says) used in our context, do you think?
3. How do you view your role as a teacher of academic paper writing?
5. Is this role constant for all students and all classes? Why/Why not?
6. Which is more important in teaching writing, do you think, the process or the product?
7. Is subject (i.e. content) knowledge (i.e. knowledge of your students specialist area) necessary for teaching APP writing? If yes, to what extent? If no, why not?
8. generally, are your students motivated to write? If yes, what motivates them to write, do you think? If no, do you motivate them to write? If yes, how?
9. In your experience, do adult students respond to teacher encouragement in the manner children do, or are they different from children? How?
10. Who is/are the audience of your students APPs?
11. Does student knowledge of L1 writing affect his/her L2 writing, in your view? Please give me an example from your experience.
12. How do you view the relationship between reading and writing? For example, is a student who is good at reading necessarily good at writing?
13. Out of the following three views on writing, which one do you agree with most if you are writing a paper for publication in *English for Specific Purposes* Journal?

    a. Writing is a process of creation that requires considerable cognitive power, i.e. a lot of thinking.
    b. Writing is a social act which adheres to certain norms and conventions.
    c. Writing is an interaction or dialogue with the reader.

D. Training/Development in Learning/Teaching Writing

1. Did you receive any training in (a) writing academic papers and (b) teaching academic writing **before** you started teaching at the ESPC? If yes, please tell me about your experience.
2. Have you received any training in writing academic papers or in teaching the academic writing component **after** you started teaching at the Centre? If yes, please give me some details.
3. Have you attended/participated in any conferences on the national, regional, or international levels? If yes, please give me an idea about the event and your participation.
4. Have you attended any seminars/workshops given by native speakers (we'll call them outsiders) on writing, or reading and writing in combination, at the Centre? If yes, who are they? Please give me an idea about the topics they talked about and what you felt you had learnt from them, things, for example, that you applied in your classroom teaching.
5. Have you attended any seminars/workshops at the Centre given by insiders e.g., the Centre Director or any other teacher)? If yes, please give an idea about the topics of these activities and what you feel you have learnt from them and applied in classroom practice.
6. On the whole, to what/whom do you attribute your achievements in learning and teaching writing from among the following? Please rate them in order of their helpfulness to you:

   a. personal experience in teaching writing;
   b. colleagues;
   c. basic writing books;
   d. journal articles and published papers (please name the journals);
   e. seminars and workshops given by outsiders (native speakers) at the ESPC;
   f. seminars and workshops given by insiders (Syrians) at the ESPC; and
   g. other sources (not mentioned above).

7. (If relevant) What about your experience in writing for publication?
8. (If the teacher hasn't published yet) Do you intend to write for publication in the future? Why/why not?
9. On the whole, and depending on your personal experience of the Centre and its staff and facilities,

   a. to what extent do we need outsiders' help, and why?
   b. to what extent can we rely on ourselves, and why?

10. Are you willing to participate in and contribute to a teacher development project aiming to improve the learning and teaching of academic writing at the Centre? (Ask for more clarifications, depending on the answer, e.g., does the teacher desire incentives, rewards, pay, etc.). Why? Why not?

E. View of Self, Collaboration, Initiation, Reflection, etc.

1. What does it mean to you being an ESP teacher?
2. What does it mean to you being an academic writing teacher?
3. What are the main problems that face you as an academic writing teacher?
4. (in relation to the problems mentioned in Q 3) You mentioned that .... How do you usually deal with such a problem?
5. (Ask this question if "colleagues" is not mentioned in 4 above.) When you face a problem in teaching/learning the APP, do you usually discuss it with colleagues? (If no, why not?)
6. (If yes) Who are the colleagues you usually discuss problems with, and why?

   a. Those who teach the same component
   b. Those who teach the same class
   c. Experienced colleagues
   d. Other (please specify)

7. When do you usually discuss your classroom problems with colleagues (and why)?

   a. When they are still "hot".
   b. After thinking about them on my own and failing to come up with acceptable solutions.
   c. after discussing them with my students and failing to come up wit acceptable solutions
   d. After solving them (one way or another)
   e. Other (please specify)

8. How would you rate collaboration among colleagues in general and why?

   E = Essential
   V = Valuable
   MV = Of moderate value
   U = Useless
   VU = Very useless

9. How would you rate collaboration at the ESPC at present ?

   a. Very satisfactory
   b. Satisfactory
   c. Less than satisfactory
   d. non-existent

10. Do you believe that collaboration is necessary in some contexts more than others (e.g. in ESP contexts more than in general ELT contexts, or in Third World countries more than in developed countries, etc.)? (If yes, why?).

11. Do you believe that teaching and learning academic writing require collaboration more than it is the case with other skills/components? If yes, please give reasons. If no, why not?

F. View of Responsibility and Accountability

1. Suppose a big number of your students failed to make satisfactory progress in writing, whom would you blame, and why?
2. Who are you accountable to as a teacher: your students, your colleagues, the Director, University Administration, or any other that I haven't mentioned? Why?
3. Is covering the whole course materials of any course component necessary in your view? Why/Why not?
4. Suppose the Director came to observe your class unexpectedly. Your students were happily listening to a popular song in English, which you were using as a warm up activity, when she entered. After the class she called you into her office and told you that what you were doing was not appropriate for postgraduate doctors (or whatever). How would you respond?
5. Suppose the Director were not satisfied with your explanation, what would you say/do?

G. Attitude to Innovation

1. What do you feel about the final exam being the only criteria for passing or failing the MA/MSc students at the ESPC? Would you like changes to be introduced in this area? How and why?
2. Are you happy with the assessment criteria for the APP component? Why/ why not?
3. Generally speaking, who decides what to teach what (component) at the ESPC? What about "how to teach"? What do you feel about this?
4. What do you think of the idea of team writing of APPs, i.e., two or more students of the same specialisation working on one research topic and writing it up?

5. (If the teacher disagrees with the idea) Team writing is one of my MA recommendations, depending on the research findings. Would you agree to pilot it in your class as part of the coming research project?

H. Beliefs and Values in Relation to Team Work

Please respond to the following statements in accordance with the rating scale below. Your responses are based on the assumption that you are a member of a research team, working with colleagues to investigate the relevance and applicability of a pedagogical innovation, e.g., team writing of APPs.

5 = Strongly agree
4 = agree
3 = Uncertain
2 = Disagree
1 = Strongly disagree

1. Senior members of a research team can make better contribution to the research than junior ones.
   5 4 3 2 1

2. Cooperation with one's research team serves the integrity of the research.
   5 4 3 2 1

3. Silence is best if one is unsure of what to say in discussing issues with colleagues.
   5 4 3 2 1

4. Adherence to the agreed on code of ethics is essential for the success of team research.
   5 4 3 2 1

5. Research reports should include accurate description of what has happened.
   5 4 3 2 1

6. I feel upset if colleagues I am working with reject my suggestion.
   5 4 3 2 1

7. Working on a research project while the school year is in progress affects teacher's work in the classroom negatively.
   5 4 3 2 1

8. Silence in a discussion with colleagues signifies lack of knowledge.
5 4 3 2 1

9. Every member of a research team can contribute positively to the process and product of research.
5 4 3 2 1

10. One should go on working with one's team even though some of the meetings seem unproductive.
5 4 3 2 1

11. Working in a research team is a process of learning.
5 4 3 2 1

12. Junior members of a research team make the least contribution to the research.
5 4 3 2 1

13. Teacher researchers should meticulously observe and document not only their students' learning behaviour and style, but also their own teaching
5 4 3 2 1

14. In research, actions and attitudes of people are observed and evaluated, not the people themselves.
5 4 3 2 1

15. It is upsetting to see another research team in the school doing better than one's own.
5 4 3 2 1

16. In educational research, errors (in research) should always be acknowledged.
5 4 3 2 1

17. A healthy research atmosphere in a school is one where the researchers are in genuine pursuit of the "truth".
5 4 3 2 1

18. Classroom research should be considered in teacher assessment/promotion.
5 4 3 2 1

19. It is natural to say " I don't know/ not sure" if one is uncertain about something.

5 4 3 2 1

20. Headteachers play an important role in the success or failure of teacher research.

5 4 3 2 1

I. Thank you for all your answers and time. If you have anything to add in relation to the topics raised in this interview or any other relevant subject, please feel free to express your views and/or put forward your suggestions.

Appendix 2.3

Peer-Validation Sheet of Student Group Interviews
Med Class
28 May 1996

Dear Observing Colleagues: Salma and Shehab,

As a follow-up to the video-taping of the APP session in a Med class on 28 May, I need your responses to the following questionnaire in order to validate the conclusions I have reached after discussing four questions with students in your presence. Our conclusions will be further validated by the audio and visual recording made during the session in case of discrepancy.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sada A. Daoud

First, let me remind you of the four questions raised for discussion with students at the end of the session:

1. What is the main problem that faces you in writing the APP?
2. Would writing the APP on a topic that relates to your particular specialization interest you more than writing it on a general medical topic? Please give reasons.
3. Would you prefer to write your APP individually or in collaboration with colleagues of the same specialization, e.g., cardiology? Please give reasons.
4. How would you like your teacher to help in the process of writing?

Conclusions

The conclusions I have reached after observing the class and listening to recorded student answers to these questions are below. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with them. If you are not sure, please tick the "Uncertain" option.

1. In answering Q1, students generally agreed that lack of time and inexperience in writing academic papers, even in Arabic, were their main problems.

   ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Uncertain

2. In answering Q2, students expressed different attitudes (e.g., wishing to write on pure social, non-medical topics, and general medical topics), but the majority

expressed their desire to write on topics that related to their own specialization because they had both the subject knowledge and the terminology - things lacking in the case of writing on general topics .

❒ Agree ❒ Disagree ❒ Uncertain

3. In answering Q3, students generally agreed that they would rather write their APPs in collaboration and mentioned several advantages of doing so (some depending on their own experience), e.g. saving time and producing a better quality paper.

❒ Agree ❒ Disagree ❒ Uncertain

4. In answering Q4, students generally agreed that they would like the teacher to raise their awareness of how papers were written in English because of their inexperience in this matter, and some praised their teacher for doing so.

❒ Agree ❒ Disagree ❒ Uncertain

Appendix 2.4

Pre-Report Questionnaire

Dear Colleague,

This questionnaire is part of my base-line research data. Whether you teach the academic project paper (APP) or not, I should be grateful if you would fill it in now and return it to me.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sada A. Daoud

A. Personal Data

1. Name:

2. Do you teach the APP at present?

   ❒ Yes ❒ No

3. Did you teach the APP in the past?

   ❒ Yes ❒ No

4. Would you like to teach the APP next year?

   ❒ Yes ❒ No

B. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements. If you are not sure, please tick the option "Uncertain". If you choose "Disagree" or "Uncertain", please quote the number of the statement you disagree with and write a comment giving your reasons briefly and concisely.

1. Team writing of academic projects (i.e. two or more students of the same or related specialisations writing on one topic) is a better alternative to individual writing for the ESPC students.

   ❒ Agree ❒ Disagree ❒ Uncertain

2. Writing is an activity that requires collaboration among the students themselves and between the teacher and students.

❒ Agree ❒ Disagree ❒ Uncertain

3. Though much has been done to improve the learning and teaching of APP writing at the Centre, this component is still problematic.

❒ Agree ❒ Disagree ❒ Uncertain

4. The conditions available at the ESPC at present will make team research successful.

❒ Agree ❒ Disagree ❒ Uncertain

5. I am willing to participate in a research team to improve the learning and teaching of academic writing at the ESPC.

❒ Agree ❒ Disagree ❒ Uncertain

C. Please write your comments in the space below, quoting the number of the item you wish to comment on.

Appendix 2.5

Post-Report Questionnaire

Dear Colleague,

This questionnaire is part of the research project I am working on at present. I should be most grateful if you could fill it in and pass it to me personally. Your cooperation will be highly appreciated.

Thank you in advance.

Sada A. Daoud

Personal Profile

1. Name:----------

2. Component you teach:----------

3. Years of experience in ESP: ----------
4. Have you ever taught writing in English? ☐ Yes ☐ No

(If "yes", please go to the next question. If "no", please go to question # 6.)

5. What *type* and *level* of writing have you taught?
   Type: ☐ General ☐ Specific (ESP)
   Level: ☐ Sentence ☐ Paragraph ☐ Essay/paper

Feedback on the Reported Research (Please tick one response for each of the multiple-choice questions.)

6. To what extent do the **findings** of the reported study seem **credible** to you?
   - ☐ Completely credible
   - ☐ To a large extent
   - ☐ To some extent
   - ☐ To a small extent
   - ☐ Not at all

7. Whatever your answer to Q # 6, please give your **main reason.** ----------
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8. To what extent do the stated **implications** of these findings seem **logical** to you?

- ☐ Completely
- ☐ To a large extent
- ☐ To some extent
- ☐ To a small extent
- ☐ Not at all

9. Please give the main reasons for your answer to question # 8 above.----------
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10. To what extent do the researcher's **recommendations** seem **practical:** (a) for the Medical groups, and (b) for the other groups (Hum, Sci-Tic)?

(a) Medical Groups

- ☐ To a very large extent
- ☐ To a large extent
- ☐ To some extent
- ☐ To a small extent
- ☐ Not at all

(b) Other Groups

- ☐ To a very large extent
- ☐ To a large extent
- ☐ To some extent
- ☐ To a small extent
- ☐ Not at all

11. Do you think these recommendations should be implemented at the ESPC ?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure

12. Whatever your answer to Q # 11, please give your **main reason**. ----------
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13. Please write in the space provided below any comments/observations you would like to make on the reported study. Please write overleaf if you need more space.

Appendix 2.6

Teachers' Area(s) of Interest Questionnaire

Dear [name],

First of all, I would like to thank you for agreeing to join the Collaborative Academic Writing Research Project (CAWRP). Please respond to the following questions according to the instructions for each one. The aim is to find out in what way you would like to contribute to it. The general focus of contribution is mentioned in each case. You will be informed about the specific focus of the activity/activities you select, plus any necessary details, at an appropriate date/time.

1. The following activities are needed in the preparation for the CAWRP and/or in the process of its implementation. Which of them would you like to contribute to? (Please tick as many as you like.)

❒ A workshop/seminar on evaluation to be given to the teaching staff at the Centre

❒ A presentation and critical evaluation of published articles/papers on academic writing (theory and practice)

❒ A workshop/seminar on action research

❒ Video/audio taping

❒ Writing and typing research reports

❒ Photocopying

❒ Conducting library-related activities (e.g., induction sessions)

❒ Social activities

2. How would you like to contribute to the activity(ies) you have selected? (Please tick one answer.)

❒ I would like to conduct the activity on my own.

❒ I would like to collaborate with other colleagues in conducting the activity and prefer a leading role.

❒ I would like to collaborate with other colleagues in conducting the activity and prefer a minor role.

❒ It does not matter how; I am flexible and can contribute in different ways according to the requirements of the project/activity.

3. One essential part of the CAWRP is action research, mainly in the APP classes. This implies (a) collecting classroom data with specific focus in mind (taking the constraint of time into consideration); (b) analysing the data individually or in collaboration with a colleague; and (c) presenting this data to the research team (other teacher researchers in the same or other course) in a weekly or biweekly meeting, as required.

(a) Do you agree to carry out action research in your class to serve the aim of the CAWRP? (Please check one answer.)

❒ Yes ❒ No

(b) If no, please give your reasons.

4. Teacher-researchers on either a particular course level (e.g., Med., Sci-Tec, Hum, etc.) or on an institutional level (i.e., all courses that have APP writing) will be invited to present their overall research reports by the beginning of the academic year (1997-1998) as a conference paper or a journal article.

(a) Are you willing to collaborate to achieve this goal? (Please check one answer.)

❒ Yes ❒ No

(b) If no, please give your reasons. ----------

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5. In the space below, please add any comments and /or suggestions you would like to make. Please write overleaf if you need more space. Thank you for your cooperation.

Appendix 2.7

Baseline Interview with the Centre Director
29 May and 12 June 1996

Sada: Dr ..., first of all, I'd like to thank you for inviting me to interview you at home, in spite of your medical condition. I do appreciate this a great deal.

A. Personal and Professional Profile

Q1: If possible, please give an idea about your personal, professional, and academic profiles.

A: I'm a widow. I've got two children, a medical doctor and a dentist. They are both married now. I have two grandchildren. I'm 54 years old.

I started working at the Centre in 1982. I was a Counterpart to the British KELTs who undertook setting up the Centre. One arrived in 1980 and the other beginning of 1981. In 1985, I became the Director of the ESPC.

As for my professional profile, I started teaching English in 1971 at a preparatory and secondary school in Damascus. Then I was transferred from the Ministry of Education to the Ministry of Higher Education, the University of Damascus. In the first part of my work (4-5 months), I was a Counterpart; I did not do any teaching because I had to leave for England to do my MA. When I came back in 1983, I was still the Counterpart but started teaching at the ESPC. Then I left for England again in 1985 for my PhD, stayed there for about 8 months to do the first part. Upon my return, I became the Director, but also taught on courses. My teaching load was reduced from 16 to 10 hours a week when a Director, and I have been teaching ever since in addition to being a Director.

As for my academic profile, my pre-service education was at the American School in Aleppo. I studied both the Syrian and American curriculum. I got the High School Certificate, the Freshman and Sophomore. Then I did the Syrian Baccalaureate. After that I studied at Damascus University for 4 years to get my BA in English. Then I did the General Diploma in Education in 1966. In 1982, I went to the UK and did my MA in Teaching English for Specific Purposes .... In 1993, I got my PhD ....

View of self as Director

Q2: What does it mean to you to be the Director of the ESPC?

A: I do not take the fact that I am the Director as important, but I feel that I have a certain mission to accomplish while I am the Director of the ESPC. I have a firm belief that the person makes the post important and not the other way round. So it is not the post that is making me an important person, but it is me that is making the post important. But again, I feel that being the Director enables me to set up - I can't say an ideal, but a good educational institution, because, again, I believe we as a Third World country cannot compete with more developed countries unless we have a sound educational system. And I can ensure that we are taking one step forward in that direction by making sure that what we do at the ESPC is what is supposed to be done.

Q 3: Do you see yourself more of an administrator or teacher?

A: I don't see myself more of an administrator than a teacher because without knowing much about teaching and what it means to be a teacher, I can't be a good administrator because I have to go through the experience my teachers are going through in order to be able to communicate with them.

Self-evaluation

Q 4: How would you rate your performance as an administrator and teacher?

A: I have to abstain here because I can't be 100% objective in rating myself.

Sada: This is a self-evaluation question.

A: Of course there is an element of subjectivity in self-evaluation. But I think I am a very good administrator and a very good teacher. I rate myself as excellent because I'm trying to improve myself.

View of self in the eyes of others in the work place

Q 5: How would you like the teachers and students to think of you?

A: Woof! This is a tough question. The situation is a bit paradoxical. I'd like the teachers and students to like me and respect me. I want us to be friendly but not to have an over-familiarity situation; to be cooperative but not informal. The main focus is accomplishing what is supposed to be done. I don't know whether you did any reading on sociology; it has always to do with how people see you and how you want them to see you; how they see you and how you see them and how they want you to see them.

Workload and commitment

Q6: How many hours a week are you required to spend at the Centre? How many hours on average do you usually spend at the Centre?

A: I am not required to spend a certain amount of hours at the Centre. I believe in flexitime, and usually I spend more time at the Centre than I'm required to as a government employee. In addition to my work at the Centre, I do things for the Centre outside the Centre: meeting people, work from home. So if you put all these together ... I put in more than nine hours. If you include everything, even the thinking about he Centre, maybe it is 20 hours a day. Really! I am not exaggerating.

Personal achievements

Q7: What three main things you feel you have personally contributed to improving the situation at the Centre - things that you are proud of having achieved?

A: I have managed to keep the Centre growing and managed to avoid falling into a static situation. This is the first thing I'm proud of achieving. Another thing I'm proud of having achieved is that we can say that we have an institution now, one that can keep on growing automatically. We have a core of educated, devoted, well-trained teachers, who can keep the Centre growing. I'm also proud of having established a good reputation for the Centre and its work. At the same time, we are rendering many services to the University.

Personal and professional aspirations

Q 9: What are the main things you'd like to contribute in the future - things you are trying to achieve at present, perhaps?

A: English language teaching is a very minor part of the educational process. In fact, I do not want to be seen as a Service Unit. Or I do not want my teachers and myself to be seen as English language expert teachers only. I think we should go beyond that to becoming educators. And what I want the Centre to be is not just a Service Unit whose main task is to teach English, but to contribute to the formation and personality of our students and teachers. Although students come to us at a later stage in their education, I think we can, nevertheless, leave our mark on them before they leave the Centre.

Centre problems and ways of dealing with them

Q 10: What are the main problems that face you and the Centre now, if any? And how are you trying to deal with them?

A: The first problem we have is to do with space. We're a bit short of rooms, and we want to expand. Hopefully, the Faculty of Education upstairs will be moving in the summer, and we might be given some extra rooms. I want to set up a self-access Centre. We are in the process of buying the equipment for it. Visibility, I believe, is very important in our culture, and in other cultures as well, I think.

Sada: What do you mean by "visibility"?

A: I mean you have to be seen all the time by the others -- seen doing things when you are actually doing things. You can't just say to yourself OK I'm doing the work I'm supposed to be doing properly and that at the end of the day people will realise that I'm doing things properly. This is in our case is NOT enough. So you've to be everywhere to see what is needed and sometimes take the initiative to do things that people do not ask you to do, but you think you can do - I mean the Centre and myself - and this is time consuming. So we find ourselves at the Centre doing more than actually running courses: a lot of services to the University Administration. I am doing a lot of work on the international level now: educational agreements with other countries - English speaking countries. We've done a lot of work with the States, Britain, and Japan. We've been actually running Japanese courses for three years now.

Publications

Q 11: Could you, please, give me an idea about your experience in writing for publication in English and Arabic.

A: I'm afraid I don't have much to say here. I've published three articles, one in English and two in Arabic. The one, in Arabic, is in print now. It is about language teachers: their problems, status, experiences - that is language teachers at Damascus University on the graduate and undergraduate levels. It was given at a symposium here on the teaching of foreign languages at Syrian Universities.

Q: What about the book you've told me about?

A: I haven't finished it yet. Other than the teaching of English, I'm interested in women's studies, and I lecture on women's issues. But my lectures have not been published. I'm writing a book on *The New Syrian Woman*. Hopefully, next year, I'm going to publish it.

B. Teacher Recruitment, Pre- and Inservice Training, and teacher Evaluation

Teacher recruitment policy

Q1: What criteria do you use for recruiting and contracting teachers for the Centre?

A: We have our own recruiting criteria. They are not part of the university's contracting policy. The process is very simple. First, the candidate applies, filling in a form, and then we set up an interview. If I find that the candidate possesses the qualities we're looking for [we accept her/him]. Experience is good if it is available in the candidate; if not, it is not a condition. We're trying to form our own well-trained staff at the Centre. So the main thing is willingness to work, high degree of commitment, open-mindedness, and willingness to learn - to try new things. If these qualities are available, the candidate has to sit for a language exam. We use samples of international language tests, samples of the TOEFL, for our own internal purposes.

Sada : Is the teacher's writing ability part of this TOEFL exam?

A: No, we don't have writing. There is some writing in the application form; they have to write why they want to teach at the Centre.

Sada: Do you take the level of their writing ability into consideration when you read these forms?

A: Yes, I look at it from this point of view. Then if they do well on the language test, we recruit them.

Pre- and inservice provision at the ESPC

Q 2: In my interview with you last year, you mentioned that new teachers were having on-the-job training ... [interrupted].

A: Yes we did this once. This is one reason I tried to set up this Med-Campus training program. First of all, if you look for teachers, you're not bound to find qualified teachers on the job market -- who are willing to come and work, but we have a shortage of people who are trained in ELT. Another reason for starting this Med-Campus program is that the Ministry of Higher Education has decreed regulations saying that English language teachers cannot be recruited unless they follow a training course at the ESP Centre, even at the undergraduate level. But now we don't have the means to do this. That's why we haven't put pressure on the faculties to put this directive into application. Hopefully, it will be applied next year [1997]. We might collaborate with the Faculty of Education. I don't know; I haven't decided yet. But the state of matters as far as ELT on the undergraduate level is concerned is really very sad, and I always say that it is not the book, but the teacher that matters. Education, as you know, is not like factory work. You set up a factory and you flood the market with products the same year. In education, the process is much, much longer. So hopefully, next year things will be better. We have three years now to finalise this project.

Sada: So things have changed at the Centre as far as pre-service since last year. Is this what you mean?

A: Yes, usually, teachers follow a pre-service course before starting teaching. I've explained to you my aim behind the Med-Campus program. Now, we have four teachers undergoing training. We also have someone detailed to us from the American Language Centre to train them and they get pre- and then inservice training. There are no courses in the literal meaning of the word "course". It is not well-defined and designed for specific purposes. Training at the Centre is an on-going process. You remember you and [Enas] were trained by Lee, the American Fulbright. The course you followed was not a course per se - a defined course, but a teacher training course. The same applies to the mini-course the trainers gave upon their return from the UK. As for what they learn and the methodology, these are well-specified. In the case of inexperienced teachers, they have to follow a pre-service, except for the last two teachers we had; they did not have pre-service.

Q 3: What do these new teachers learn?

A: Theory and practice. We focus on the teacher's role in the classroom, classroom management techniques, learning theories, a bit of course design, because they have to understand why they have to do this or that, and different teaching methodologies and approaches which are interrelated with syllabus design. We don't have microteaching. But we have a good deal of classroom observation and follow-up discussion between the trainer and trainee teacher. The focus of our courses is reading. You'll notice that they know a lot about reading than writing. When they start teaching, their mentors observe them on a continuous basis and they observe each other with the mentors.

Q 4: Is the main focus ESP or EGP?

A: Both. Now the gap between the two is narrowing. What distinguishes ESP from EGP is, I think, needs analysis and designing courses according to the needs of students. Now even in EGP, they take the needs of students into consideration. As I said, this year, we have trained new teachers in the mini-course given by the trainers upon their return from Leeds. The mini-course covered areas like reading, management, interaction, etc.- things that we think are important to the teaching process. Then we took the completely new teachers and applied this mentoring model on them. So now we have on-going inservice training for four teachers under the mentoring model: two teacher trainers, each has two teachers. They have very close work relationship with her. They do theory and practice. They are given a lot of reading assignments, which they discuss with their trainers, then classroom observation sessions. Again, this has been easy because we have this open-classroom policy; they just make an appointment and observe classes.

Q 5: When did this type of training start?

A: In January [1996].

Q 6: Who assesses the trainees' performance and How?

A: The trainers assess them in a report they hand in to me. They assess their personality and performance on an on-going basis. Again, at the end of the training course, they have to give me a report on each. Up till now we are doing teacher training in an unspecified or defined manner. The mini training course run in November [1995] was videoed and all the reading assignments were photocopied and sent together to Leeds for formal evaluation. We haven't received any feedback yet. We are expecting a formal evaluation.

Q 7: Who will evaluate these materials in Leeds?

A: The people who trained the teacher trainers ...

Training in teaching writing and the APP

Q 8: You mentioned that the focus of training is the teaching of reading, and that reading is the main skill our students need, and so it is given high priority in the training courses. What about the writing skill? Do you provide the teachers with training for teaching writing, particularly the APP?

A: I'm afraid that teaching and learning writing as a skill is not given as much importance as the reading skill, and this is based on the fact that we are teaching the customers - postgraduate students - not for the aim of going abroad, but mainly to teach them to carry out their research in Syria in Arabic. They need to go back to references in English. This is one of the basic needs of our students. Time allotment is based on these considerations. But we know that reading feeds into writing and writing feeds into reading.

Action research at the Centre

Q 9: What about teacher action research?

A: Last year [1995] we started it in the training program, and some teachers gave presentations on their action research. The main aim is to have them carry out action research in their classes and write up their findings, to make them learn by doing. I don't know how many have accomplished this. I know that [Mazen and Zeina] are writing up. [Enas] has written up and [Sonia] is also writing. Last year [Shehab] also carried out action research, and this year he wrote about exams. They are a bit apprehensive of writing.

Q 10: Are there enough references in the library for the teachers to refer to?

A: There are a lot of references. You know that people from other centres and foreign cultural centres now come to our library. Now we are in the process of ordering journals, and the University has approved to pay. Our only problem is finding hard currency.

Inservice workshops and seminars: Attendance policy

Q 11: What is your policy towards teacher attendance of inservice activities?

A: It is mandatory.

Q: Why?

A: Not because I want to be oppressive but because I'm aware of the time pressure on the teachers. Many of them have teaching responsibilities elsewhere, especially the younger ones, and I'm putting stress on them to attend. I make it clear to them that if you want to work at the Centre, you should give priority to the Centre, not only the teaching, but also for workshops, seminars, etc. Not attending the seminars/workshops, etc. will affect my overall evaluation of the teachers at the end of the year.

Q 12: Someone mentioned that your emergency absence from the Centre might have affected the rate of attendance of the staff meeting on 30 May, when I gave a presentation on my MA study. What do you think of this observation?

A: This might be true, but I don't think so. I think the people who did not come, did so because they had other things to do, not because they did not want to come. But again, I put this pressure: "It is a *must*" because I know that they have a hundred things to do outside the Centre. Some are doing diplomas; others teach in private institutes. You know that many of them, especially males with families, can't rely on what they earn from the Centre. So they change their time for their out-of-Centre activities in order to attend the Centre meetings. They *have to* find a way; that's what they have promised me.

Med-Campus Project: Future ESP teacher training in Syria

Q 13: One of the things some teachers mentioned in the interviews is the Med-Campus Project. Can you, please, give me an idea about it and its importance for the Centre.

A: This is one thing that has been achieved depending on my personal initiative. We applied for the Med-Campus program, which is a program set up by the European Union, and one can apply with a detailed description and detailed budgeting of a proposed project. There is a Scientific Committee which studies the proposals, and if they think the project is good for this specific institution, they agree to fund it. We started this project last year [1995]. As I said, it was my personal initiative, a kind of bid -- a contract. You bid for the contract. We have a lot of work to do, but I am happy to say that we've eventually got funding for three years. These programs as described by the European Union brochures were set up with the aim of providing the South - in their language - with the technology and transferring all this technology from the North to the South. In this project, I am the Coordinator because I bid for the project, and you've to have at least two European partners. I this case, they are the University of Leeds and University College Cork in Ireland. And there should be at least one partner, a Mediterranean educational institution. In this case, it is the ESP Centre at Alexandria University in Egypt. The Med-campus Project aims at setting up a teacher training program and training people who will teach on it, the teacher trainers. Last Year we sent four of our teachers to Leeds for five weeks. They were trained as teacher trainers, and when they came back, they ran a short teacher training course. This project is not a one-off thing; it is supposed to be a continuous thing. Also, we have another type of teacher training, done in the mentoring model. Now we continue doing the teacher training mentoring model by having one trainer to be in continuous contact with two or more novice teachers, going to the classroom with them, observing with them, informing them about theory, etc.

Staff turnover at the ESPC

Q 14: Is there high turnover of staff at the Centre at present?

A: I don't think so. Since the Centre's establishment, very few teachers have left. Those who did either retired or they went back to their faculties because they were contracted on part-time basis. So the term "high turnover" is not appropriate. We can say "We are expanding".

C. Views on Collaboration and Leadership

Accessibility

Q 1: To what extent are you accessible to the teachers, students, and administrative staff?

A: I am accessible to all these, mostly administrative staff because they come in and out with all the paper work. But as far as the teachers and students are concerned, I am accessible but in an organised way. Again there is an area where I had difficulty in establishing a system or order whereby teachers were made to understand that I was always available on one condition: that they make an appointment.

Leadership style

Q 2: How would you describe your leadership style?

A: I am trying to decentralise and to assign people responsibilities; not they [Co-ordinators] would be given a free hand in whatever they want to do with their teachers; We have to agree on the policies, because we have meetings on regular bases. If they have new ideas, they can be discussed, and then we can vote on the issues.

Director's accountability

Q 3: Who are you accountable to?

A: On the face of it, I am accountable to the University Administration, but mostly I am accountable to myself and the teachers. In our system (I'm not going to mention names or names of institutions doing services similar to ours where no teaching and no learning is taking place) people tend to believe that there are no problems if you have a timetable and classes; to them everything is going on well. To me this is *not* actually accountability. Accountability is a major theme in my PhD thesis, and this is an area I'm very much interested in.

Decision-making at the Centre

Q 4: How would you describe the decision-making process at the Centre?

A: It is bottom up rather than top down because we go through extensive discussions and prescribed materials have to be agreed on by all the members of teaching staff. Also the same applies to components and number of hours. Sometimes I come up with suggestions, which are approved or amended. But at the end of the day, it has to be approved by all the teachers.

Q 5: Who decides who to teach what and how to teach at the Centre?

A: I decide who to teach what because I feel I'm the one who has the knowledge about the weaknesses and strengths of every teacher. As for teaching methodology, when the Centre was set up, we were too much oriented towards the communicative teaching methodology. But now in our teacher training courses, seminars, workshops, etc., we are trying to be more eclectic. We are trying to encourage the teachers to think and not to adopt a certain methodology without thinking. So our methodology is decided by a) our collective experience and b) the critical analysis of up-to-date theory on teaching methodology. I don't know; communication now has a hundred meanings. People have lost the meaning of "communicative", for example, classroom manager, facilitator, etc. When we started to apply this methodology, we used to leave students on their own and tell them to find the answers, but students need a teacher, so now the pendulum is coming to the centre.

Native speaker trainers

Q 6: What do you think of native-speaker trainers, who trained teachers at the Centre?

A: We had a Fulbright visiting professor, an American Fellow, a teacher trainer, and another American Fellow. From my experience, I have found that unless given guidance by me, these people would have never been able to do anything at the Centre. [X], for example, was not a teacher trainer. Actually we trained her, and she admits it.

Sada: In what way did you help these native speaker experts?

A: I guided them. All of them had a lot of things that they were knowledgeable in but I had to match between this knowledge and the context. This is where they needed guidance.

Sada: Generally speaking, whom have you found more helpful to the Centre and teachers: the British or American experts?

A: Honestly I cannot distinguish between the two. I feel that the Americans are more on the practical side, and some American academics I worked with accused me of being pro-British, which is not the case. It depends on the person who gives the workshop or seminar. As for writing for publication, some teachers published under the guidance of an American Fulbright, but we don't have the same experience with the British. So I can't compare.

Self-reliance

Q 7: To what extent can we rely on ourselves for developing ourselves in the present situation, do you think?

A: To a limitless extent. We can do everything by ourselves. But again, in Third World countries, we can always find people who say: 'No, no, no'. They are with being isolated: 'We can do everything by ourselves; we don't need any experts; we don't need any foreigners, etc.'. In this respect, I am *dead* against this. We can depend on ourselves; we should depend on ourselves, but there is no harm in making use of other people's experience and knowledge. I'm for the open-door policy, with opening all the doors onto the outside world, gaining as much as we can from whatever is going on, whether in Syria or abroad. But at the same time relying on ourselves. You see what I mean?

Collaboration

Q 8: How do you view collaboration in our professional and academic world in general? [multiple choice question]

A: Essential

Q 9: How would you rate collaboration at the Centre?

A: There is always a room for a better situation, but taking all the constraints into consideration, I find it very satisfactory.

Q 10: How do you see teacher-teacher collaboration at the Centre?

A: [thinks for a while] It is difficult to generalise. This differs from teacher to teacher. Generally speaking, it is satisfactory.

Q 11: What about teacher-student collaboration?

A: Very satisfactory.

Q 12: And student-student collaboration?

A: In the group itself, in most cases, it is very satisfactory because I think all the teachers are managing to establish group cohesion in most of the cases, not all. As for between the groups, it is not satisfactory because most of our students are not full-time students; they have full-time jobs in addition to their attendance or they are full-time postgraduate students or full-time teaching assistants, etc. So it is not because of lack of interest in collaboration, but mainly because of lack of time.

Q 13: Is collaboration in ESP more necessary than in EGP contexts, do you think?

A. Collaboration in ESP teaching contexts is, I think, more necessary than in EGP contexts because students in most cases come from disciplines where they have a lot in common. So there is more need for collaboration, and it might be more successful. Of course, time is a constraint on collaboration.

Q 14: Is collaboration in ELT contexts in Third World contexts more needed than in the developed world, do you think?

A: I don't think collaboration in Third World teaching contexts is more needed than in developed countries unless we want to save time and catch up with developed countries. In this case we need intensive collaboration.

Q 15: What about collaboration in writing and teaching/learning writing?

A: Academic writing takes longer time and longer process, and that is why it might require collaboration more than reading, for example, although collaboration has been shown to be useful in reading as well.

Teacher evaluation

Q 16: Is there any system of teacher evaluation for any purpose at the Centre?

A: I hate formal evaluation. I never evaluate teachers on the basis of classroom observation because they don't give strong evidence, but I observe their performance in workshops, seminars, etc. - all consciously and informally done. The teacher gets the message, but *not* in my office. I'm more keen on novices. I even draw their attention to social interaction. The younger teachers are more amenable to these comments. For example, I say to the teacher "You are a very good class communicator, but watch your language".

Teacher action research (TAR) and teacher evaluation

Q 17: Do you think that teachers' classroom research should be considered when evaluating teachers for promotion and other purposes, e.g., financial and academic awards?

A: Yes, of course.

Director's feedback for teacher development

Q 18: Do you usually give the teachers feedback after observing them?

A: No, because the purpose is not to judge them but for allocating who to what.

D. Perception of Writing, Teaching and Researching Writing, and Other Related Curriculum Matters

Perception of academic writing

Q 1: Which view of writing, out of the following three, would you agree with most if you were writing a paper for publication in the *ESP Journal*?

a) Writing is a process of creation that requires considerable cognitive power.
b) Writing is a social act which adheres to certain norms and conventions.
c) Writing is an interaction or dialogue with the reader.

A: c, I think.

Variables affecting teaching/learning APP writing

Q 2: What are the most important factors that affect the teaching/learning of APP writing at the Centre, do you think?

A: The time constraint. In Hum and sci-tec they have two hours; they need six. In the Med, they have one hour; they need five. One week before the deadline for handing in the APPs, you see the Centre buzzing with activity: the staffroom, library, classrooms, etc., with students and their teachers working on the final APP drafts together. Writing for the majority of non-native English speaking students is a challenging task.

Q 3: What about students' subject knowledge? Does it help their writing?

A: It helps a lot.

Q 4: What about teachers' knowledge of students' subjects?

A: I don't think it affects teaching performance. As the time goes on, teachers acquire a lot of subject knowledge, which helps them to learn from students. I taught dentists last year; they taught me a lot of things. Again this is also useful because we are also teaching students how to discuss things.

Director's evaluation of the Centre teachers' role in teaching the APP

Q 5: What role do the Centre teachers assume in teaching academic writing, do you think?

A: To be honest, there is a difference between what is written on paper and what actually takes place in the classroom. I've observed this. In the written handouts we give out, it is stated that teaching/learning methodology should mainly be guiding the students through the process. But in some cases, it is becoming more than guidance, and in other cases, it is very loose guidance; students are given only general guidelines and then left on their own, but these are rare cases. In other cases, teachers correct everything for their students.

Q 6: Does experience on its own qualify teachers to teach the APP, do you think?

A: **Yes**, I believe experience can qualify teachers to teach the APP. Experience counts, but they need some theoretical background. Also attending inservice workshops helps a lot.

Weak students and the Director's policy

Q 7: Are there any hopeless cases in writing amongst our students, do you think?

A: Yes, especially in the Humanities. If they don't know how to write a sentence, and if you can't go down to their level to help them produce an APP at the end of the three months, the only thing that can be done to solve this problem is to tell them to go and follow other courses and then come back to us.

Syllabus coverage and its relation to examinations

Q 8: Do you require the teachers to cover all the materials and units?

A: Yes, because at the end-of-course exam, students in each course have one exam, and if the teacher did not cover all the materials, her group might be put at a disadvantage.

Q 9: How do you make sure that the teacher has covered everything?

A: I check the classwork reports. Sometimes teachers tell us that they haven't been able to cover all the materials and ask us to take this into consideration when deciding on the exam. But I require them to finish, though they are not penalised if they don't because I know the reason is not lack of effort on the part of teachers but because they have a weak group.

Q 10: Are the teachers required to use supplementary materials of their own selection?

A: I do not require that, but I encourage them to do so. I've found this very good for the teacher morale. They feel happy when they bring in something of their own to the course. In the APP workshop we gave, we left it open to the teachers to bring in supplementary materials. This will also urge them to check sources in the library.

Teacher competition

[in the margin of the above answer] Now there is something happening at the Centre, especially among the younger ones. They compete. One says: I did so and so. The other would say 'why not me; she is not better than me. I'm going to try and do something better. This is for the benefit of the students.

Teaching APP writing: Overload and teacher rewards

Q 11: Do you think that APP writing teachers are more overloaded than others?

A: Yes, I believe teaching the APP is much more demanding on the teachers' time than teaching other components.

Q 12: How do you reward their extra effort?

A: We don't here have a policy of rewarding the teachers materially, but I think all of them know that one day ... they will be rewarded one way or another. I know how much work they do. Last year when I taught the APP, for two months I allocated three hours every afternoon to the students.

Q 13: What is your estimate of the time novice and experienced teachers spend on evaluating APPs at home a week?

A: Usually we try not to give novices the APP to teach, but from what I saw and heard, I think that when they are given the APP, the put in at least one hour per student per week for correcting students' homework, maybe more. I think experienced teachers spend less than an hour because they are more at home.

E. The Collaborative Teacher Development Project: The Ethical Agenda

Director's Role in the Project

Q1: As I have told you in our initial meeting on the 4th of May, the main aim of my PhD research project is to find out to what extent we can collaborate here at the ESPC to improve our potential as learners and teachers of academic writing using an action research approach. I intend to invite my colleagues and the administrative staff to join the project after I make clear to them what is expected of them if they want to join it. I believe that your role is of great importance since you are the Director and one of the most experienced among us. My question is: What role would you like to play in this research project?

A: How would *you* like my role to be?

Sada: I don't know; it's up to you actually. Perhaps you'd like to act as an internal supervisor.

A: Yes, it would be advisable to act as your internal supervisor, not in the literal meaning of the world, but as consultant, a springboard for testing the new ideas before implementing them.

Q 2: My intention is to involve all the teachers in the project. When, in your view, is the best time to implement it?

A: Before trimester two, to prepare the ground, and trimester two and three to do action research. The APP starts in the third week of every trimester.

Q 3 Since the project requires teachers to carry out action research and then meet to discuss and evaluate their findings, how frequent should these meetings be in your opinion:

a) in the three-month courses?
b) in the six-month course?

A: In the three-month courses, you definitely need a weekly meeting. In the six month course, you need biweekly meetings.

Q 4: Which day or days will you be able to allocate for teacher meetings?

A: Thursday is usually allocated to staff meetings.

Q 5: Would you agree to consider giving the teachers who would carry out action research within this project some kind of incentive? These will be in the majority of cases APP teachers; they are overloaded already, and they might need some incentives to encourage them to participate.

A: We can give them two hrs/wk for the research, if we have enough teachers next [academic] year. Otherwise, I can't promise.

Sada: I'm thinking of other incentives as well: moral encouragement in the form of a letter of appreciation that can be added to their professional profile. Also, I'm thinking of considering teacher research in any form of assessment or evaluation of teachers' performance and work.

A: Ah, of course we can do that, but I don't know whether they can consider this as an incentive. In the Western culture, it is. But I don't want to reward people who participate on the face of it. I want people to be really active in the research, not just going through the motions, attending meetings and so on.

Director's conditions regarding teacher research and classroom innovation

Q 6: Trying out "team writing", the innovation, will necessitate giving us, the teachers, some freedom to manipulate the Core [reading] component to serve writing. Are you willing to give us this freedom?

A: This is a very, very sensitive question. I am not against manipulating the Core in accordance with research findings, but sometimes if it is not organised, each teacher will do whatever he/she likes and it will be chaotic. So this has to be *very* well organised and highly and tightly controlled.

Sada: Up till now, I am not clear about the specific details of the design. I need to read more literature in the coming months. But my feeling is that we need to maneuver a bit with the reading component to improve APP teaching.

A: I know. I have an idea. To make sure that it is successful, this manipulation has to be under tight control conditions, not in restricting teachers' freedom, but in the sense of organisation.

Q 7: What do you mean here?

A: I know that you are an honest researcher and that you are after improvement of practice at the Centre. However, I think the literature in this type of collaborative research, not the one I did, says you discuss your findings with your subjects.

Sada: Do you mean that I should tell the teachers about everything as the research is progressing? Mightn't this, in our culture at least, upset the whole process?

A: I do not mean your specific findings but the overall ones. You'll be having two types of research: overt: teachers' research, and covert, your research. But in collaborated research, the literature says, you discuss it with your subjects. For example, when I did mine, I did not discuss it with you, because I thought this would spoil the whole thing if you knew I was observing you. After I started my PhD research, things have changed. The literature on collaborative research says you have to get the consent of your subjects on what you publish. I leave it up to you. You can discuss things with me if you consider me your internal supervisor. I know what you feel because I went through the same thing.

Sada: That's what I am doing now; I am discussing things with you, and tomorrow, I will discuss things with the teachers before asking them to sign up. We need to agree an ethical code, so that all of us will be clear about what to do and what is expected of us all. I believe in evolutionary planning, not in prescriptions. This is supported in the literature. What I need to know now is whether or not there will be any other activities running during the implementation phase.

A: I don't know of any yet.

Sada: We need to keep in touch during the coming stage. X has agreed to act as the project Coordinator while I am UK-based. I will keep in touch with you both and she will inform me about any changes that might affect project design. The first thing I should do, I think, is to select appropriate and relevant materials and post them to you as soon as possible. I'd like the teachers to make use of their long summer vacation, doing some reading and preparation for this project. I know how overloaded they are while teaching. I also need to teach on the courses and take a participatory role in the implementation phase. I'd like to test my MA recommendations in practice myself as well and work alongside colleagues, not on them.

Director: Because of the accident, I was unable to attend your MA presentation. Can I have a copy of it to read on my own?

Sada: Yes, of course. I'll send you a copy with X tomorrow. I should have done that without you asking, but I have forgotten; I'm sorry.

Director: No problem.

Q 8: Can we call the Project Collaborative Action Research Project (CAWRP)?

A: Okay.

Q 9: Would you like to add anything else?

A. There's nothing that I can think of now.

Sada: Thank you very much for the time, support, and encouragement.

Appendix 2.8

End-of-Baseline Phase Report and Signing up

Staff Meeting (13 June 1996)

Dear Colleagues,

The baseline research is now over. Its main aim was to investigate the relevance and viability of the research project.

Research findings indicate that the topic is both relevant and viable. Now I want to tell you more about the research project, its aims, timing, methodological approach, requirements, and usefulness. It is hoped that this information will help you take an informed decision to sign up.

A. Aims

The aim of this project is to help us improve the learning and teaching of academic writing at the Centre adopting a research approach and depending on ourselves and our resources.

B. Timing

In my interview with the Director yesterday, she suggested that orientation activities, the theoretical part, take place in the first trimester and teacher action research, i.e., the application, in the second and third trimesters, when all the courses would be running. If you'd like to suggest an alternative date, please feel free to say so.

C. Methodological Approach

In order to achieve its aims, the project needs to be carried out in the form of action research. This type of research has been found to be of great benefit to teachers, students, and the whole institution. Previous research at the ESPC has proved this (Daoud 1995).

D. Project Requirements

The project requires team work and effort. Everyone I interviewed strongly agreed with the statement "Every member of a research team can contribute positively to the process and product of research". For sure, each one of us can contribute something. The project requires participants to perform one or more of the following activities:

Discussion Circles, Presentations, and Workshops

Discussion circles, presentations, and workshops are needed in preparation for teacher action research. These will be based on selected readings from the literature, focusing

on writing methodology and action research. I will send you a selection from the UK in August because, as you know, up till now journals are not available at the ESPC. We need to keep in touch to agree on an agenda and focus for these activities in the coming weeks. I will post my address on the noticeboard in the teachers' room for this purpose.

Action Research

In order to achieve project aims, we need to apply to ourselves what we require of our students in the APP component: read, research, and write up. Thus, one essential part of the project is carrying out research in our classrooms. Research will be problem-solving in nature, and the focus will be writing-related topics, particularly APP writing. We will also pilot one of my MA research recommendations: team writing of APPs. The Director of the Centre has approved testing this innovation in practice. Its aim, as you might have gathered from my MA report, is to ease the time and teacher overload constraints. We need to agree on an ethical code before we carry out action research in the Main Phase. I perceive my role as a team member, coordinator, and, of course, researcher. This role, however, needs to be flexible.

Director's Role and Support

The Director's support is essential for the success of this project. All interviewees agreed on a similar statement in the interview. In my meeting with her, the Director expressed her desire to act as my "internal consultant" and "springboard for new ideas". This is much appreciated in view of her long experience as a teacher, researcher, and manager. Her active participation will help us all.

E. Usefulness of the Project

It is my belief that this project will be useful in many ways.

1. It will help to broaden and reinforce our knowledge of ourselves, our learners, our context, writing, learning and teaching writing, and research methodology. It is an optimal opportunity for learning in the case of teachers who want to proceed to higher studies and for those who want to develop their potential as teachers of academic writing.
2. It will help us develop our writing curriculum in a way based on research.
3. It will reveal many potential areas for future research at the Centre (or even in the wider context).
4. It will provide material for teacher researchers to participate in conferences.
5. It will encourage the teachers to write for publication and contribute to knowledge.

Finally, if you have any questions, please ask them before you sign up for the project. This signing up is what is usually referred to as ethical code. The project requires not only hard work but, most importantly, commitment.

Appendix 2.9

Reading List for the Main Study

1. Silva, Tony (1990). Second language composition instruction: Development, issues, and directions in ESL. In B. Kroll (Ed.), *Second Language Writing* (pp. 11-23). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

2. White, Ronald V. (1988). Academic writing: Process and Product. In P. Robinson (Ed.), *Academic Writing: Process and Product* (pp. 4-16). London: Modern English Publications and the British Council.

3. Bloor, Meriel, and Maggie Jo St John (1988). Project writing: The marriage of process and Product. In P. Robinson (Ed.), (pp. 85-94).

4. Hedge, Tricia (1994). Second language pedagogy: Writing. In *Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics*. Aberdeen: Elsevier Science.

5. Raimes, Ann (1993). Out of the woods: Emerging traditions in the teaching of writing: In S. Silberstein (Ed.), *State of the Art of TESOL Essays: Celebrating 25 years of the Discipline* (pp. 237-260). Alexandria, Virginia: TESOL.

6. Allwright, Joan (1988). Don't correct - reformulate! In P. Robinson (Ed.), (pp. 109-116)

7. Mangelsdorf, Kate (1992). Peer reviews in ESL composition classroom; What do the students think. *ELT Journal*, 46, 274-284.

8. Charles, Maggie (1990). Responding to problems in written English using a student self-monitoring technique. *ELT Journal*, 44, 286-293.

9. Campbell, Cherry (1990). Writing with others' words: Using background reading text in academic compositions. In B. Kroll (Ed.), (pp. 211- 230).

10. Pennycook, Alastair (1996). Borrowing others' words: Text ownership, memory, and plagiarism. *TESOL Quarterly*, 30, 201-230.

11. Salager-Meyer, Fracoise (1994). Hedges and textual communicative functions in medical English discourse. *English for Specific Purposes*, 13, 140-70.

12. Doushaq, Mufeeq H. (1986). An investigation into the stylistic errors of Arab students learning English for academic purposes. *English for Specific Purposes*, 5, 27-39.

Sources on Action Research Used in the CAWRP

Action Research

1. McNiff, Jean (1988). *Action Research: Principles and Practice*. London: Macmillan.

2. Hopkins, D. (1993). *A Teacher's Guide to Classroom Research*. 2nd edition. Milton Keynes: Open University Press (Chapter 5, Developing a Focus)

3. Chamot, Anna (1995). The teacher's voice: Action research in your classroom. *ERIC/CLL News Bulletin* (March), 18 (2), pp. 1 and 5-8.

4. Richards, Jack and Lockhart, Charles (1994). *Reflective Teaching in Second Language Classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

5. Nunan, David (1992). *Research Methods in Language Learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

6. Brumfit, Christopher, and Mitchell, Rosamond (Eds.) (1990). *Research in the Language Classroom*. London: Modern English Publications in association with the British Council.

Appendix 4.1

Data Analysis Sample: Feedback Questionnaires

Name of respondent: ----

A. Respondent's Reflections and Decisions Related to the DC Activity"

1. DC Activity is very beneficial in many ways. First it gives teachers the opportunity to share ideas and experiences. Second, it helps in improving the communicative strategies used among a group working in one educational environment.

2. The Last DC Activity was not up to my expectations as a teacher for only one reason: more time is needed as well as more discussion. Therefore, in my opinion, the number of articles discussed must be lessened, and more discussion-time should be allowed.

3. For the coming DC activities, I decided to read more in depth, because reading helps in the development of the discussion. In other words, better results will be achieved.

Name of respondent: ----

A. Respondent's Reflections and Decisions Related to the DC Activity"

1. As a teacher for the first discussion, I believe my role was not very clear to them. But now after I lived that through the experience, I've learnt that I need to do more. For example, to state the focus of the discussion clearly, to declare the aim of the article to be discussed, to link to our context, and to draw the final image of the whole discussion as clear and brief as

2. I realized that we need to discard the attention to the main focus of the researcher. I mean to remind the participants with the target aim of the whole research at the end of the discussion as a conclusion maybe.

3. The handout that was given after an absent collaborative discussion norms was very thoughtful. To help during the DC Unit some participants if not most lack the knowledge of these techniques and norms.

Name of respondent: -

A. Respondent's Reflections and Decisions Related to the DC Activity"

1. To take a more active part in the Discuss concrete as our role wasn't clear in the first session.

2.

Appendix 4.2

Data analysis Sample: Diary/Fieldnotes

Saturday 18 January 1997
APP correction: I spent 11.45 hours correcting APP drafts.

Collaboration: I called [Reem] to ask her if she could stand for me in today's session as I had fever and was coughing. She agreed.

Sunday 19 January 1997
Problems (Time) After I had explained to Reem what to do in my APP session, I had a terrible fit of coughing as I was writing the following note to the Director:

"Please consider giving the teacher researchers time to report and get feedback on their research. You have previously agreed to give them such a time in a meeting with you and I have informed them about your decision ... (see report on 26 December meeting). Thank you".

Monday 20 January 1997
Expectations, negotiation: As I received no answer regarding the time requested, I decided to go to the Centre for today's meeting with the Director though I was not well and still had fever.

Time constraint, teacher autonomy: Hind said there was a written answer to my request in my pigeon hole. The Director wrote: "I agreed to have these teachers give their reports (in-progress and final) during the all-staff weekly meeting on Thursday. However, dates for this activity were not set and approved ..."

Politics: The Secretary removed project announcements from the main noticeboard and placed them on the one crowded with course announcements.

Staffroom talk, problems: I don't know why the Director does not seem to feel comfortable when she sees me talking to my colleagues. [Shehab] was telling me about his research and showing me the questionnaire he gave his students when she passed by. She stopped and scolded me, saying that I had wasted a full hour of her time.

Tuesday 21 January 1997
Incentives, Motivation, Funding, Conference, staffroom talk: Shehab called and informed me that all the abstracts to the Third Maghreb Conference were accepted.

The teachers were excited. Now they are more concerned about finalizing their research and finding means for funding. We mentioned USIS, and I encouraged them to see the Director for support and advice.

Peer observation, classroom humour: Reem came to observe my APP class. Three presentations were given in her presence, one in collaboration. I was impressed by students' willingness and ability to address their peers. They commit many mistakes while speaking, but I don't interrupt them. However, their peers do sometimes. For example, today, one student used "she" in his reference to "neural computer". Some students giggled, and one remarked: "Why 'she' and not 'he'?". He told the presenter that he should use "it'. But the presenter insisted that "these computers think like human beings, and we can call them 'he' or 'she'. It was an interesting and lively discussion!

22 January 1997

Weak students: I had a pre-observation meeting with [Abeer]. She told me about Hum students' protest against their being asked to drop out because they got less than 10/25 on Part One of the Placement Test. (22/1/97)

24 January 1997

Teacher reading: I called the teacher researchers to remind them to read Chamot (1995) in depth because it has answers to many of their questions ... Shehab and Abeer said they had read it, and Noor said she was reading Nunan (1992) and found that action research was not necessarily related to problems and that it was not necessarily cyclic.

Conference: I reminded the teachers who wanted to go to Tunis to finalize their abstracts and post their registration forms.

30 January

MEP meeting; students' APP research: The interaction in the MEP meeting today was enlightening about how research is understood by some staff at the Centre:

Director: Reem stressed that students can't do field research in mathematics. I think we made a mistake last year; we said we wanted field research. Not all research is field research. We learn from our mistakes, as Sada said.

Hind: In certain fields it is difficult to do field research.

Director: As Reem said, you should not insist on actual research.

Appendix 4.3

Early Individual Response to Article Reading

Literature Reading
A Response Sheet
August-October 1996

Dear Colleague,

This response sheet will be used for research purposes only. I should be grateful if you would briefly answer the questions below after reading each of the selected articles on writing methodology. Please use one response sheet for each article, and write overleaf if you need more space. Please try to be as specific as you can in your answers, e.g., by referring to particular points in the article and particular courses, teaching/learning situations, etc. at the ESPC. I should be grateful if you passed all your response sheets to [redacted] the project co-ordinator, as soon as you fill them in.

1. Full name of respondent: ----------

2. Title of the article you are responding to: Project writing: The marriage of Proc and Pr Academic Writing: Process and Product / by Blear

3. What have you learnt from this article that you didn't know before?

Nothing

4. How can the knowledge you gained from this article be of use to you as a teacher?

It makes me even more confident of what I'm already doing with my students. It also gives me a sort of relief that project work is recieved as a difficult challenge to most students everywhere.

5. Write 2-3 questions, based on your reading of this article, you'd like to raise in the Teachers' Discussion Circle.

1. This paper deals with a teaching situation in which each student has a tutor as project supervisor. In a situation like ours: one tutor for a class of at least 10–15 Ss, what are the disadvantages of this kind of project writing? And how can they be overcome?

2. "The learner should accept that the schemata involved have some connection with their own concern". How can this be employed to raise Ss' interest in project writing? That the schemata involved have som

Appendix 4.4

Sample Formative and Summative Orientation Stage Feedback Questionnaires

a) Formative Feedback Questionnaire

12 December 1996

Dear colleagues,

The aim of this questionnaire is twofold. Section A is to be completed after reading the overall evaluation of the first Discussion Circle (DC). Its aim is to get feedback on this reading. This feedback is entitled "Reflections and Decisions". Please try to reflect on your role in the DC and note down your reflections and related decisions, i.e. the actions you intend to take in view of your reflections. As you can see, I have expressed my own reflections and decisions aiming at sharing them with you.

The handout mentioned in the feedback sheet contains excerpts from Edge's *Cooperative Development* (1992). It was given to you last Monday after the staff meeting. Perhaps you would like to comment on it, among other things, in your "Reflections and Decisions".

Section B is intended to get feedback from you on the Oral Presentation (OP) activity we are having today. Please answer this section at the end of the OP activity.

Please try to be as specific as you can. Generalizations are better understood if supported by details and/or examples.

Thank You.

Name of respondent: ----------

A. Respondent's Reflections and Decisions Related to the DC Activity

1. ----------

2. ----------

3. ----------

B. Respondent's Comments on the Oral Presentation Activity

1. Comments on the way the activity was organised, i.e., what do you think of the idea of two or more teachers collaborating to present a research article to their colleagues, and *why* do you think so?

---

2. Comments on the researched idea(s) presented in the article and its/their applicability to the ESPC context

---

---

3. Comments on whether or not the OPs have met your needs and/or expectations

---

---

4. Comments on the discussion parts of the OPs (whatever attracted your attention: positive and negative aspects).

---

5. What have you learnt from the OP activity that you did not know before (any aspect of learning), and how will this reflect on your learning/teaching?

---

6. Please mention any other comments not covered above and write overleaf if you need more space.

b) Summative Orientation Stage Feedback Questionnaire

19 December 1996

Dear Colleagues,

The aim of this questionnaire is to find out about our overall position towards the project activities we have experienced so far and our decisions concerning the next action cycle in the CAWRP. Please try to be specific by supporting generalizations/conclusions with details/examples in your comments.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Name of respondent: ----------

A. Please underline the word/phrase (just one) that best corresponds to your position, and then explain WHY and HOW in the "Comment" that follows each statement. These comments will help me to recommend any particular activity or not.

1. I read (all/ few of/none of) the articles sent from England.

Comment: ----------

---

2. My (in-depth reading/inadequate reading/not reading) has affected the way I participated in these activities.

Comment: ----------

---

3. I have found the Discussion Circle (DC) activity (useful/useful to some extent/useless).

Comment: ----------

4. I read (one of/neither of/both of) the articles presented in the Collaborative Oral Presentation (COP) activity.

Comment: ----------

5. I have found the COP activity (more interesting than/less interesting than/ as interesting as) the DC one.

Comment: ----------

6. I have benefited from the COP activity (more than/less than/in the same way) I did from the DC.

Comment: ----------

7. I have found the COPs (more interesting and useful/less interesting and useful/as interesting and useful as) the Individual Oral Presentation(IOP).

Comment: ----------

8. I have decided to read (all the articles/some of the articles /none of the articles assigned) for any future DC, COPs, or IOPs.

Comment: ----------

---

9. I believe that teacher DCs, COPs, and IOPs should be inbuilt into any inservice teacher development programme at the ESPC. (Please underline "Agree" or "Disagree".) Agree Disagree

Comment: ----------

---

10. I will do all I can to attend such activities if they are held at the ESPC whether I will be paid or not. (Please underline "Agree" or "Disagree".)

Agree Disagree

Comment: ----------

---

11. Please add any comments you would like to make in relation to any aspect of the above named Project activities. Please write overleaf if you need to extend your comment for any of the statements above, and quote the statement number if you do.

Appendix 4.5

Sample Feedback Sheet

Teacher Evaluation of the Collaborative Oral Presentation Activity

19 December 1996

Dear Colleagues,

Here is a sample of our comments on the Collaborative Oral Presentation (COP) activity. Please read these evaluative comments carefully and try to reflect on them and on your experience today of the Individual Oral Presentation (IOP) activity in order to respond to "Teacher Feedback Questionnaire # 2", which is attached to this feedback sheet.

I do thank all the teachers who did their best to give more details and examples, i.e. were specific, in answering "Teacher Feedback Questionnaire # 1". There is a striking improvement in the quality and quantity of commentary, as you will see. I hope that this achievement on our part will continue to be reinforced in answering today's questionnaire.

Thank you all for your cooperation.

Depending on the questionnaire design, I have classified our comments under four main sections: A, B, C, and D. The abbreviations used after the comments mean the following: **ET** = Experienced Teacher; **NT** = Novice Teacher; **P&PT** = Presenter/Participant Teacher.

A. Comments on the Collaborative Aspect of the COPs

1. " . . . more organised than the previous activity [i.e. Discussion Circle], especially when it was prepared by more than one teacher which enriched the OP & discussion" (ET).

2. "One teacher dominated the presentation more than the other" (NT).

3. ". . . lively and interesting. It strengthens the relationship between colleagues . . . They seem more relaxed" (ET).

4. "A good way for learning and collaborating; creates warmth. It is more informative" (ET).

5. "I think it's a good idea for many reasons, the first of which is that it saves time of preparation of the collaborative teachers, also it helps in giving new ideas that may not come to the mind of one teacher by the other one. Finally, personally I think that this way helps in leading better discussion if they are really collaborating." (P&PT).

6. " I believe that two heads are better than one and one eye's better than none. With two teachers, there is always more variation, information, and experience . . . " (P&PT).

B. Comments on the Idea(s) Presented in the Research Article(s)

1. " The idea [peer reviews] is applicable to the ESPC context to a large extent. This is, of course, according to the pilot study I did in my class" (P&PT).

2. "Self-monitoring method is applicable only in high levels" (ET).

3. "The idea of peer reviews can be applicable starting from the second level, whereas the idea of self-monitoring can be applicable starting from the third level" (NT).

4. "Peer evaluation in writing is more effective with beginner students than self-monitoring. Nevertheless, self-monitoring process in writing is an essential technique which we need to train our ss on step by step" (NT).

5. "Self-monitoring is good to apply with advanced students. Peer evaluation is good, but time consuming" (ET).

C. Comments on the Discussion Part of the COPs

1. ". . . the cooperation between the partners was very good. The discussions were good" (ET).

2. "forgive me but it was kind of boring. The presenters were rather lecturing and preoccupied with their own ideas and experiences which made them less receptive to what others had to say" (NT).

3. "Discussion raised in the two OPs sprang the fact that the ESPC Ts and SS cannot be considered full time Ts and SS devoting all their time to the teaching/learning process with all its complications" (ET).

4. "Lively, informative with many good views presented by the teachers & participants" (ET).

5. "I almost answered all the questions of the attendants not giving the chance to my partner . . . to answer them back, except in one case. This is a negative aspect . . . about me. And I feel sorry for myself because I always say I must get rid of this habit. Concerning the second presentation, it was good, very good even, for they pushed attendants to participate unconsciously" (P&PT).

6. "- As a participant: . . . I found it a weak start discussion part while the teachers talked most of the time. As a presenter: I think we gave too much time to discussion which you may think a negative point" (P&PT).

D. Comments on the Learning Aspect of the COPs

1. "To have a strong opinion and feeling towards what you're going to present is very essential in spotting out the image of your topic very clearly. We don't only need to talk about the article, but we also need to live the idea of the article as if it was ours to make the best of it. . ." (NT).

2. "It reminded me of different methods, some of which I used in previous courses. It is always important to listen to other people's experience, and to read about different methods. . ." (ET).

3. "I had a previous idea about peer reviews. However, the OP activity made it clearer to me. The OP gave me an idea how peer reviews can be applied. But as far as the idea of self-monitoring is concerned, I did not have a previous idea about it. It was new to me. I will try of course to make use of the two . . . ideas because I really believe that they can make students better writers of English" (NT).

4. "To speak less, to know and ask about others' experience, to read more about anything . . ., to collaborate with other teachers to find out better ways of teaching and learning since teaching and learning are two sides of the same coin" (P&PT).

Appendix 4.6

The Summative Feedback Questionnaire

20 March 1997

Dear Colleagues,

With the CAWRP nearing its final stage, we need to reflect and objectively evaluate the project activities and their effect on our context.

The aim of this questionnaire is to find out about our views regarding the project in general. Our objective evaluation will help us suggest some practical recommendations.

Your responses will be treated with confidentiality and anonymity.

Thank you for your cooperation.

PART ONE

Personal Profile, Values, and Beliefs

A. Personal Profile

1. Name (initials):
2. Post at the ESPC:
3. Number of teaching hours (per week) at the Centre:
4. Number of work hours outside the Centre:
5. Academic qualification(s):
6. Age group: 20-30 31-41 42+
7. Components you teach:
8. Groups you give Core and APP to:
9. Approximate time you spend each week evaluating your students' homework (other than APP):
10. Approximate time you spend each week evaluating APP homework:

B. Values and Beliefs

Please respond to the following statements by underlining "Agree" or "Disagree"

1. Teacher's critical reflection seldom leads to better understanding of teaching and learning.

Agree Disagree

2. "Practice and reflection are supposed to contribute to change and reform."

Agree Disagree

3. A school-based collaborative approach to teacher development requires an atmosphere of trust and empathy.

Agree Disagree

4. In writing, teachers create their educational knowledge.

Agree Disagree

5. Teachers' fear of saying what they feel and think triggers their personal and professional development.

Agree Disagree

6. Experience alone is insufficient as a basis for teacher development.

Agree Disagree

7. Teacher Development is based on curriculum development.

Agree Disagree

8. "Our aim as teachers is not to leave the world as we find it."

Agree Disagree

9. Good teachers are good learners.

Agree Disagree

10. Good teachers should never say "I don't know".

Agree Disagree

11. Teacher self-evaluation is basic for professional development.

Agree Disagree

12. "One person's cooperation and consensus [is] another's coercion and constraint."

Agree Disagree

13. Reflection and self-evaluation are two basic characteristics of good teachers.

Agree Disagree

14. Competition among teachers helps them to develop.
Agree Disagree

15. "Reflection and action are tightly interlinked."
Agree Disagree

16. Dedicated teachers seldom find time to keep up-to-date.
Agree Disagree

17. Sharing and caring are two basic characteristics of collaborative development.
Agree Disagree

18. Curriculum development is based on teacher development.
Agree Disagree

19. Teacher classroom research affects students negatively.
Agree Disagree

20. "The 'critical community' is a community of equals in respect to power."
Agree Disagree

21. All teachers and students have the potential to develop and improve.
Agree Disagree

22. Teachers should be forced to learn and improve themselves.
Agree Disagree

23. Teachers should have a say in what to teach and whom to teach.
Agree Disagree

24. Teacher development serves students' interest.
Agree Disagree

25. Autonomous teachers are unable to develop self-reliance in their students.
Agree Disagree

26. Writing is a painless process.
Agree Disagree

27. Encouragement, not force, helps students and teachers to develop.
Agree Disagree

28. Teachers' and students' freedom to learn disrupts school order and discipline.
Agree Disagree

29. Both experienced and novice teachers can contribute to teacher development.
Agree Disagree

30. An extensive knowledge base empowers teachers.
Agree Disagree

31. Effective school heads encourage staff development in their schools.
Agree Disagree

32. Experienced teachers seldom need to question their own beliefs about teaching and learning.
Agree Disagree

33. Experienced teachers are the best teachers.
Agree Disagree

34. Writing is an instrument in the creation of educational change.
Agree Disagree

PART TWO

Teacher Evaluation of the CAWRP

A. Effect on Teacher Knowledge

Please respond to the following statements **by underlining** the word or phrase that corresponds best to your view. In your comment, please support your view with details and examples.

1. The Project has increased my knowledge of writing methodology to a (very large/large/moderate/small/very small) extent.

Comment:

2. The Project has increased my knowledge of the nature of writing to a (very large/large/moderate/small/very small) extent.

Comment:

3. The Project has increased my knowledge of my students to a (very large/large/moderate/small/very small) extent.

Comment:

4. The Project has increased my knowledge of the ESPC context to a (very large/large/moderate/small/very small) extent.

Comment:

5. The Project has increased my knowledge of classroom research methodology to a (very large/large/moderate/small/very small) extent.

Comment:

B. Effect on Beliefs and Attitudes

Please **underline** the answer that corresponds to your view, supporting it with details in the "Comment".

1. To what extent has the Project affected your beliefs about collaboration?

To a great extent To some extent Not at all

Comment:

2. To what extent has the Project affected your attitude to writing?

To a great extent To some extent Not at all

Comment:

3. To what extent has the Project affected your attitude to research?

To a great extent To some extent Not at all

Comment:

4. To what extent has the Project affected your attitude towards your colleagues?

To a great extent To some extent Not at all

Comment:

5. To what extent has the Project affected your belief regarding outsider/insider intervention to develop teachers professionally and academically?

To a great extent To some extent Not at all

Comment:

6. Has the project proved the viability of a collaborative approach to teacher development at the ESPC?

Yes No

Comment:

7. How would you rate collaboration at the Centre as it has been evident in the Project in general?

Excellent Good Adequate Poor

Comment:

8. On the whole, has the project been a success or a failure?

A success A failure

Comment:

9. In your view, what are the main constraints that have faced the Project? (Select the ones you think are relevant from among the following and add others you think relevant.)

a) A competitive attitude on the part of some Centre staff.
b) Teacher overload in and out of the Centre.
c) The fact that two projects are running at the Centre at the same time.
d) Course time constraint.
e) Unplanned holidays.
f) Insufficient moral support and encouragement for the Project.
g) Lack of motivation on the part of some teachers
h) Errors committed by the Project initiator (Please explain what errors in your end comment.)
i) Bias against some teachers and dominance of some others.
j) Resistance to change and innovation.
k) Lack of freedom in general.
l) Insufficient understanding on the part of some Centre staff of the aims of CAWRP perhaps because of not reading the two clarification sheets and other handouts and announcements.
m) Insufficient attendance of the main Project activity (teacher research reports) because of scheduling the meeting on the day just before a holiday.
n) Mixing personal and academic matters.
o) Other (Please specify.)

C. End Comments and Suggestions

Please add any comments and suggestions you would like to make in order for any future projects of this kind to be more effective and successful. Please write them below and overleaf if you need more space.

Appendix 4.7

Student Questionnaire

4 March 1997

Dear Student,

This questionnaire is part of a research project currently being carried out at the ESPC. It focuses on the writing component, particularly the Academic Project Paper.

Your honest answers will help us improve the teaching/learning of this component. Please read the questions carefully and do only what is required. *You can use English or Arabic in answering the questions that require explanation.* Space is provided after these questions, but you can always use the margin if you want to write more.

Please do not write your name. No one except the researcher will read your answers.

Thank you for your cooperation.

SECTION ONE

1. Your general and specific specialisation: ----------
2. Group/class: ----------
3. APP teacher (initials only): ----------
5. Core teacher: ----------
6. Other teachers (if any): ----------
7. At what stage are you now in writing your APP? (i.e., what have you done so far, and what is left to be done in the rest of the course?)

SECTION TWO

1. Which skill among the following do you NEED to learn most? (Please underline ONE.) Reading Writing Listening Speaking

2. Which Skill do you WANT to learn most? (Please underline ONE.)
   Reading Writing Listening Speaking

3. Give the main reasons for your answers to Qs 2 and 3.

---

4. Do you believe that Academic Project Paper Writing is one of your present or future needs? If yes, why? If no, why not?

SECTION THREE

1. How are you writing your APP? (Please underline ONE answer.)

   a) Collaboratively (with another student).
   b) Individually (on my own).

2. What is the main reason or motivation for your writing collaboratively or individually (Q1)?

---

3. Did your APP teacher introduce you to collaborative writing? If yes, how?

N.B. If you are writing collaboratively, please answer questions 4-10, then go to Section FOUR. If you are writing individually, please go to question 11, and then continue to the end of the questionnaire.

4. Do you think that you and your partner are equally contributing to the writing of your APP? If yes, how? If no, why not?

---

5. Do you think that you and your partner deserve the same mark for the APP in the exam? If yes, why? If no, why not?

---

6. Have you found working collaboratively on the APP useful or helpful to you? If yes, how? If no, why not?

---

7. What is the main problem that has faced you so far in writing collaboratively?

---

8. On the whole, have you found the task of working collaboratively on your APP **enjoyable** and **interesting** ? If yes, how? If no, why not?

9. Who do you feel has done more of the writing (the actual composing), you or your partner, and why?

---

10. What do you feel now about your decision to write collaboratively? In other words, do you feel you have taken the right or wrong decision, and WHY?

N.B. Question 11 is for students writing individually.

11. What do you feel about your decision to write individually? In other words, do you feel you have taken the right or wrong decision and WHY?

SECTION FOUR

1. Are you interested in reading your peer's APPs and in having yours read by them? If yes, why? If no, why not?

---

2. Mention the TWO main problems that have faced you so far in writing your APP?

---

3. Who, do you think, should judge the quality of your APP? (Tick ONE answer, a, b, or c.)

   a) The APP teacher.
   b) A classmate of the same specialisation.
   c) Both (a and b)

4. Whatever your answer to Q3, please give your main reason(s).

---

5. Following is a list of writing-related activities. As you read, please tick ALL those you have had the opportunity to practise or experience *in class* in the present ESP course.

a) Reading and analysing published research articles/papers or parts of them.
b) Summarising an article or part of an article or paper.
c) Taking notes on authentic (i.e., real) research articles/papers.
d) Peer editing (i.e., reading a peer's text and commenting on it).
e) Contrasting and comparing texts written in Arabic with those written in English.
f) Giving progress oral presentations (i.e., giving a report to the class about your APP when work on it is not finished).
g) Quiz testing for learning writing (i.e., short tests aimed at checking whether students have understood the writing conventions in theory and practice).
h) Self-correction depending on editing symbols agreed on by teacher and students.
i) Revising (i.e., rewriting for improving one's text in general).
j) Giving and receiving ORAL feedback (comments, suggestions, etc.) to/from the teacher on one-to-one basis.
k) Giving and receiving WRITTEN feedback to/from the teacher.
l) Giving and receiving ORAL feedback to/from peers.
m) Giving and receiving WRITTEN feedback to/from peers.
n) Other (please specify) ----------

6. Which of the above activities (Q5) have you found

a) interesting (i.e., gave you pleasure but little benefit)? (Please mark those using one asterisk: *.)
b) useful (i.e., gave you benefit but little pleasure)? (Please mark those using two asterisks: **.)
c) both interesting and useful (i.e., gave you both pleasure and benefit)? (Please mark those using three asterisks: ***.)

7. Have you received encouraging written comments on your writing from your teacher? If yes, please write down an example of a comment that you found encouraging.

---

8. On average, how many times did you revise each section of your APP?

---

9. What did you focus on when you revised your **first drafts**?

---

10. In what way(s) does your teacher help you in the process of APP writing? (i.e., your teacher's role as you see it)

---

11. Are you satisfied with your teacher's role (Q10)? If no, why not?

---

12. In what way or ways did your peers help you in the process of writing your APP?

---

13. Are you satisfied with your peers' role (Q12)? If no, why not?

E. Please write any comments or suggestions you would like to make in relation to the teaching and learning of APP writing. Please write overleaf if you run out of space. As mentioned before, you can use Arabic or English.

Appendix 4.8

Follow-up Consent Letter and Questionnaire

Dear Dr [Director],

I hope you and all the Centre staff are well.

At this stage of my write up I need some follow up information from you and the teachers. I should be most grateful if you and they would answer the enclosed short questionnaire and send me the answers in a sealed envelop with my husband, who is visiting next month.

Congratulations on the expansion of the Centre and all the other achievements.

Yours sincerely,

Sada A. Daoud

Follow up Teacher Questionnaire

Dear Colleagues,

The aim of this follow-up questionnaire is to get information from you about two things: collaborative or team APP writing, the innovation we tried within the framework of the CAWRP, and your classroom research and related activities in the academic year 1997-1998. Your clear answers will help me make some useful recommendations.

I should be grateful if you would fill it in and pass it to the Centre Director.

Thank you for your cooperation.

- Name of tutor (optional): ----------
- Course(s) you taught in 1997-'98: ----------
- Component(s) you taught in 1997-'98: ----------

Note: If you need more space than the one provided, please write overleaf quoting the section (A or B) and number of question you are referring to.

A. Collaborative/Team APP Writing

1. Did you try collaborative APP writing in the 1997-'98 course(s)?

   ☐ Yes ☐ No

2. If "Yes", why? If "No", why not?

---

3. If you have tried collaborative APP writing in 1997-'98, to what extent are you now convinced of its usefulness to YOU and your STUDENTS? (Please circle one number:
5 is highest benefit/use and **1** lowest benefit/use)

a) To me:	5	4	3	2	1
b) To my students:	5	4	3	2	1

4. Please comment/explain in the bottom margin below (and overleaf) with reference to the number you have selected, giving as many reasons as possible for both **a** and **b.**

B. Your Classroom Research

1. Did you carry out any systematic classroom research in 1997-'98? (By systematic I mean one that involves data collection and analysis, not only impressionistic observation.)

❒ Yes ❒ No

2. If "Yes", what were the two main reasons that have motivated you to do so? If "No", what were the two main reasons that prevented you from doing so?

---

3. If you did carry out research in 1997-'98, did you report on it?

❒ Yes ❒ No

4. If "Yes", HOW and WHERE? If "No", WHY NOT?

---

5. Do you intend to carry out classroom research in 1998-'99?

❒ Yes ❒ No ❒ Not sure

6. Please comment on your answer to question 5 above.

---

7. Please add in the space below (and overleaf, if needed) anything you'd like to say with reference to the above questions or anything that bears relevance to the CAWRP in general.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Appendix 4.9

Follow-up Interview Questions

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed.

The questions I am asking you are a follow-up to some of those in the "Teacher questionnaire". They aim at getting feedback from you on the CAWRP. In most cases, I am asking for some details or clarifications.

Section One

1. What do you think of the project design as a whole?

2. To what extent did the Project meet a) your needs as a teacher? b) the needs of the context in general?

3. Would you like to see the project idea implemented at the Centre again with a different focus? If "Yes", which component? Why? If "No", Why not?

Section Two

1. If you were asked by an outsider to mention the main principle on which the CAWRP was based on in a few words or phrases, what would you say?

2. To what extent has the project succeeded in your view and for what main reason(s)?

3. What should be modified or changed if the project would be replicated at the Centre?

4. In your view, what were the main constraints on the project?

Section Three

1. How did you contribute to the CAWRP, i.e. what role did you play in its various activities?

2. What do you feel about this role now, i.e., are you happy/unhappy about it and why?

3. If the project were repeated, how would your contribution differ and why?

4. What is the most important lesson you have leant from the project ?

Section Four

1. Two of the main concepts on which the project was based were reflection and self-evaluation. Could you please explain how you put them into practice, and what effect did they have on your professional development?

2. Two other main concepts on which the project was based were sharing and caring. What was your contribution in these areas?

3. Freedom was the motto of the project. Do you think you were free to select your course of action and say what you genuinely felt and thought within this project? If yes, to what extent? If no, why not?

Section Five

1. Has the project been able to change or modify any of your beliefs concerning learners and/or learning of writing? If yes, how?

2. How would you describe the process of writing?

3. How would you describe the product of writing?

4. In your opinion, what should we focus on more in our APP writing methodology, the process or the product, and why?

5. How many of your present students are writing in collaboration? How do you explain their attitude to collaborative writing?

6. (If relevant) Do you believe that the idea of collaborative writing should become a practice at the ESPC? Why/Why not?

Section Six

1. Do you intend to carry out (more) research in your classroom? Why/Why not?

2. If yes, would you prefer to do this in collaboration with another colleague or on your own? Why?

3. Did the encouragement you received during the project motivate you to participate in the activities, or did you find this encouragement prohibiting and forceful?

Section Seven

1. Has your research helped you to understand the people with whom you work in a better way? If yes, how?

2. Is action research suitable for our ESP context? Why/Why not?

3. How would you define action research?

4. Is there anything you'd like to add at the end of this interview?

Thank you and all the best.

Appendix 4.10

Classroom Observation and Interview Consent Form
16 January 1997

Dear Colleagues,

The research I am carrying out at the Centre at present within the framework of the CAWRP necessitates doing two observation sessions for each APP teacher. There will be a pre-observation and a post-observation meeting. In the first, we'll discuss the aim of the session (as a learning/teaching experience) and that of the observation as a research tool. In the second meeting, we will discuss a "Feedback Sheet", which will report back on what was observed and ask for clarifications and comments.

I also need to interview all the Centre teachers and a number of administrators in the coming period. The main aim of these interviews is to get overall feedback on the Project.

Dates and times of observations and interviews will be negotiated with you individually. For now, I should be grateful for your consent on both and for giving me some basic information about your teaching experience by responding to the questions below.

Thank you for your cooperation.

---

1. Name of respondent: ----------

2. Job description (e.g., teacher, teacher trainer, etc. Please specify): ----------

3. Years of experience teaching English (please underline as appropriate):
   1st Year 2-4 5-9 10-14 15-19 20+

4. Years of experience teaching at the ESPC (please underline as appropriate):
   1st Year 2-4 5-9 10-14 15-19 20+

5. Years of experience teaching APP (please underline as appropriate):
   1st Year 2-4 5-9 10-14 15-19 20+

6. Group(s)/ Course(s) you are teaching at present (or any other job):

7. Do you agree to have your class observed?
   Yes No

8. Do you agree to be interviewed?
   Yes No

Appendix 4.11

The Ethical Code Report

26 December 1996

Dear Colleagues,

In our role as researchers of our context with the aim of improving the teaching and learning situation of academic writing, we need to discuss some procedural and ethical issues and take some decisions that will guide us in the process of research.

Healthy discussion can certainly serve our aim. By "Healthy", I mean the quality that emerges from participants' genuine caring and sharing. Initially, this discussion was planned to be incorporated within the framework of the Action Research Workshop originally planned to take place today but was postponed because of Christmas and New Year's holidays.

Because new courses have just begun and others are to start shortly, and in view of the constraints of time and space that face us all, we need to be clear about WHAT we should do, HOW, and WHY to the best of our knowledge at this stage of our professional development.

The issues to be raised (below) need to be discussed in the light of the ideas and principles explained in Clarification Sheets 1 & 2, the memo entitled "Testing Collaborative Writing of APPs" (21 December 1996), and finally, some extracts taken from the literature, particularly *Cooperative Development* (Edge 1992) and *A Teacher's Guide to Classroom Research* (Hopkins 1993). We need to refer to these handouts and memos in our discussion of the following issues:

A. Involvement in research: Who? How? Why?
B. Areas of research (we need to suggest some topics, preferably related to problem areas), how (narrow or broad focus)? Why (e.g., priorities)?

C. Ethical considerations:
   1. Baseline research signing up
   2. Confidentiality
   3. Sharing, caring, ownership, and dissemination of the data
   4. Access to classrooms, peers, students, teaching and administrative staff, documents, institutions and personnel outside the Centre (both for teacher and student research), etc.

D. Incentives (motivation: professional advancement vs. money)
E. Meetings: level, place, and frequency
F. Communication (noticeboard, pigeon holes, telephone calls, presentations, etc.)
G. Deadlines (presentation of findings)
H. Other issues

The success of our attempt to improve things depends on effective planning and management. Putting our heads together trying to solve our problems is of vital importance. We are the owners of the Project whether it fails or succeeds. It has been shown that commitment is the basis of success.

The Report

From: SD
To: CAWRP Participants and Other Interested Centre Staff
Subject: Feedback on the Meeting Held on Thursday, 26 December 1996
Date: 29 December 1996

In the light of my CAWRP Action Research findings up till Sunday, 22 December, I recognized the importance of having a meeting for the project participants and other interested Centre staff at this stage of the course. All teachers were informed by telephone calls and the noticeboard. Ten teachers attended the meeting held on Thursday, 26 December (one partly) (see end-notes).

The main aim of the meeting was **to discuss some procedural and ethical issues** with reference to **previous and new** memos, letters, and handouts (see endnote # 2). The decisions taken by attendees in response to items A-H in the "Procedural and Ethical Issues" Sheet were as follows (numbers correspond to those in the Sheet, and sentences enclosed in square brackets are added, i.e., they are my own):

A. We agreed that **all interested teachers and students** could be involved in Action Research, individually or in pairs (as desired). The latter form is more desirable if it is at all possible. We discussed how collaboration would give more validity and reliability to the research and referred to an Extract from Hopkins's (1993) A Teacher's Guide to Classroom Research (enclosed; see also "Extracts from Sources on Research and Teacher Development"). [Other important advantages of Action Research will be discussed in the Action Research Workshop on Thursday, 9 January 1997.]

B. We agreed that **topics should relate to problematic areas**. Piloting collaborative writing of APPs, one of the recommendations in Daoud (1995), is one priority. One teacher stressed the point that research recommendations should not be put on the library shelf to gather dust, but should be tested and evaluated in a disciplined manner, i.e., by Action Research. As mentioned in the attached "Testing Collaborative Writing

of APPs" memo (dated 21 December), all teachers who responded to a questionnaire during the baseline phase of the CAWRP agreed in principle on the idea of piloting such a recommendation.

[This was an interesting baseline finding, one that indicates our awareness of the importance of research for change and development. It implies that we are aware that nothing should be taken for granted, not even our beliefs, intuitive feelings, or recommendations. Continuous objective evaluation is basic. The world is changing, and it is important for us to keep up to date.]

As for topics for research, it was stressed (again with reference to the Extract from Hopkins 1993 and the Sheet entitled "Clues for Action Research Topics on Teaching/Learning Academic Writing", dated 26 December 1996) that we were not short of interesting, relevant, and viable topics. There are as many topics for us (teachers and students) to research as there are questions in our heads. These questions usually relate to problems in our work contexts. Analysing some of these problems by looking for causes and effects and then putting forward some recommendations for solving them will challenge our creativity and make us feel that we have done something to serve our interests and those of our students and the country in general.

We also agreed that **topics should be as narrow and focused as much as possible**, restricted to answering one or two (very specific) research questions. This is essential in view of the time constraint (see item G below) and in order for us to enjoy a sense of achievement by giving ourselves and our students the chance of accomplishing the research task and reporting our findings to our colleagues. Success breeds success and enjoyment, and failure breeds failure and frustration.

C. Ethical Considerations: We agreed that

1. though 17 teachers' signed up for the Project in May-June 1996, this **personal commitment** did not mean that they should do Action Research. To do it or not is their own free decision. However, for the sake of objectivity, validity, and reliability of the research findings, I need to know the reasons behind sticking/not sticking to one's commitment. I will not be able to put forward practical recommendations unless I get honest answers.

2. We discussed confidentiality as a problem in case-study research. To observe the ethics of confidentiality, I discussed with my colleagues the decision to use the female gender (she) to refer to teachers, and the male gender (he) to refer to students in my PhD thesis. I told them also that I had decided to use Code names (e.g., ET for "experienced teacher") NOT initials, in my reference to particular teachers. [As for our mini Action Research projects, it is advisable to use pseudonyms instead of real names. Our students need to be made aware of this ethical value as well.]

3. We stressed our belief in the **ethics of caring and sharing**. We agreed that all research participants, in their various roles, were owners of the Project. We, therefore, agreed to give presentations to all the Centre staff to discuss our research while in progress. [We can ask our students to do the same in their classes.]

4. We discussed the issue of **getting access** to research contexts, the researched, documents, etc. All the colleagues attending the discussion of this point agreed to give me access to their classrooms, students, meetings, research notes and reflections, etc. but only after informing them first and getting their consent on an individual basis. One teacher showed some reservation regarding seeing her research reflections. As far as student research is concerned, the idea of students getting a letter from the Centre to help them get access was mentioned. [Students might need to be made aware of the issue of getting access to carry out their field research, if they are not aware of it already.]

D. I reminded my colleagues that the Centre Director had agreed to give all the teacher researchers 1-2 hours (depending on type of course) a week of extra pay as an **incentive** for doing Action Research. All appreciated the offer and mentioned that their main motivation to join the Project was not money but professional advancement. One teacher mentioned the idea of having something to eat and drink in lengthy meetings. [This point needs further consideration in a general meeting, perhaps.]

E. We agreed that **meetings between collaborating teachers** (i.e., at course level) **were to be arranged by them personally** in a way convenient to their work schedule. However, research-in-progress reports as well as those at the end of the research period, need to be given on Thursdays to all the Centre staff in a general meeting to be held every two weeks. This last point has already been endorsed by the Director.

[We did not discuss written reports as we were more concerned with the process rather than the product. This does not mean that we have ignored the product. In research both process and product are important, and disseminating research findings via the written word is an ideal many teachers look up to. However, in view of the constraint of time, I suggest that written reports should be left to the discretion of individual and collaborating teachers. These reports are valuable for participating in local, national, and international conferences and getting one's work published in the proceedings later on. Actually, the majority of teachers who got published started by having their conference papers published this way. There are many examples from our context].

F. We agreed that **communication between collaborating researchers was best done face-to-face at the Centre**. Other methods suggested were phone calls and pigeon holes. [I will continue to use the noticeboard and other means as needed.] We emphasised the importance of the telephone for communication in view of the time constraint and overload. Progress presentations and related discussion in general staff meetings were also pointed out as good means of communication at the Centre level.

G. We agreed that the **deadline for giving final reports on classroom research should be about mid February** (Thursday, 13th). [Thursday, 6 February, can also be used for final reporting of research findings.] We agreed that adhering to this deadline was important in view of the fact that teachers of three-month courses would be busy afterwards preparing for tests and exams. This explains why narrowing the focus and scope of the research was highly emphasised in the meeting.

H. Other Issues: [If teacher researchers feel they need **supervisors** in the research process, provision can be made to meet this need. The Director said she had time to supervise one teacher in addition to supervising me. Please contact me as soon as possible if you feel the need for a supervisor. I am also willing to offer help to the best of my knowledge and ability to all those who seek my advice. I prefer using the phone for this purpose, particularly between 6 and 9 p.m. A meeting can be arranged if needed.]

If you have any observations, reservations, or suggestions in relation to the above agenda, please do not hesitate to discuss them with me either at the Centre or by phone (661-2008). Any comment is welcome. Comments and suggestions mean interest in the project. Such interest will be highly appreciated.

I wish you all a happy and fruitful 1997. May God bless our work.

Endnotes

1. Seventeen teachers signed up for the Project in May-June. Seven have left the Centre for various reasons ... Two have dropped out, and one novice teacher has joined the Project. Several teachers (including a teacher trainer) who did not sign up for the Project have actively participated in all its activities so far.

2. Three of the teachers who attended Thursday's (26 December) meeting had all their CAWRP materials in a special file. This is a good idea. We can bring our files with us whenever we have a meeting. This will help us to refer to documents as needed.

Appendix 4.12

Memo on Conference Participation

From: Sada Daoud
To: CAWRP Participants and Other Interested ESPC Tutors
Subject: Participation in the Third Maghreb ESP Conference
Date: 17 December 1996

This is to remind you that the deadline for sending abstracts to participate in the Third Maghreb ESP Conference, which is going to take place in Tunis between 27 February and 1 March 1997, is approaching (31 December, postmark). Please see the "Call for Papers on the noticeboard for more details.

If you are interested in sending an abstract for the topic you are going to investigate as part of the CAWRP, please try to see me, and we'll put our heads together to think of a topic of interest to you and of relevance to our context. Collaborative presentations and workshops are accepted and encouraged nowadays, particularly in the case of action research.

If your abstract is accepted, the chance of getting funding for conference expenses will be higher. Opportunities for sending the abstract to participate in local, national, and international symposia and conferences would still be open to you in case your abstract were not accepted in the Maghreb Conference for one reason or another. You can even send your paper for publication (in the *Forum*, for example).

Try not to miss this opportunity to meet and share experiences with ELT/ESP professionals from contexts similar to or different from ours. Giving a paper at a conference could turn out to be your magic key for a bright future. Seeing your name in print is another thrilling experience that many teachers aspire to. The starting point is a feeling of self-confidence evidenced in ACTION.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you think I can be of help. You can see me at the Centre or call me at 661 2008 for an appointment.

I wish you the best of luck

Appendix 4.13

Clarification Sheet #2

21 December 1996

Dear Colleagues,

This clarification sheet is a follow-up to clarification sheet #1. Its aim is to remind you of two principles because of their bearing on our collaboration and hence our personal and professional development.

Principle #1: Participation in the CAWRP activities, including classroom research, is optional. If the motivation does not come from within, it will be futile. This does not mean that you should not be encouraged to participate. Without respondents' views, it would be difficult to judge the value of something. These views will be more valid and reliable if they are based on experiencing the activities ourselves rather than hearing about them from others.

Principle #2: Feedback on activities is developmental and NOT judgmental. This means that negative comments on any activity or part of an activity SHOULD NOT be considered offensive or insulting in any way. Such honest comments **should not in any circumstances be used to offend colleagues**. Everyone of us has the right to express his/her own opinion freely, and the role of the others is to respect and empathise with that view (see Edge's *Cooperative Development*, of which I gave two extracts two weeks ago). What is important when we read a teacher feedback sheet is to consider the overall picture, i.e. the majority's view, and try as individuals to reflect on our role in that overall picture. This "self-evaluation" is considered the basis of professional development.

A colleague, whose MA dissertation is on self-evaluation, will give us more details about this concept in the Action Research Workshop (9 January).

Thank you for your cooperation, and best wishes for a happy and prosperous 1997.

Appendix 4.14

Clarification Sheet # 1

9 December 1996

Dear Colleagues,

Depending on feedback I have recently received from the Centre Director and the CAWRP coordinator, I am writing this to you. The aim is to clarify and exemplify things regarding the aims of my research and our role (yours and mine) in it. Please take time to read it carefully and reflect on its content. It is important to clear the mist in order for all of us to proceed in a well-informed manner.

The main aim of my research is to find out to what extent we as a group of teachers and administrators, working at one educational institution (the ESPC) at a particular university (Damascus University) in Syria, can cooperate and collaborate to improve our personal and professional performance (e.g. by enhancing our understanding of ourselves, our roles, our students, the nature of learning and teaching, our context, etc.) depending on ourselves and on what resources are available to us.

The majority of teachers and administrators who participated in the baseline research in May and June perceive that we CAN collaborate to develop ourselves with minimal interference from outside. In the second phase of the project (the present one), I am trying to collect data to prove whether this perception will work in action -- in the real world.

Now suppose the research would show that your perception of our ability to stand on our feet were valid, I should provide proofs: WHY we have been able to do that. In other words, the reasons behind our success should be brought out to light. They are valuable to us at the ESPC to consolidate the process we have been working on and to go on improving things further. But we should NOT keep this important discovery about ourselves to ourselves; we should report it so that other teachers and administrators who work in circumstances similar to ours can learn from us. This is the main aim of research in general: learning from others' success or failure.

The type of research I am doing is called action research. This research is cyclic and developmental, i.e. its aim is improvement -- continuos change for the better. We will have a workshop on action research on the 28th of this month as part of the CAWRP activities. For the time being, and for the sake of clarifying the aim of my research, let me give one example of what I mean by "cyclic" and "developmental":

Upon analysing the baseline data, I hypothesised (depending on my extensive reading of the literature and my baseline findings) that teacher Discussion Circles (DCs), based

on literature reading, can develop our understanding of writing methodology and approaches. Recently, we implemented the idea to see if it would work in practice. I gathered data before and after the implementation. Analysis of this data helped me to modify my plan and plan the next action cycle. For example, the data indicated that:

* a few teachers read the assigned articles and returned the response sheets;
* readers and non-readers attended the DC;
* readers and non-readers participated in the discussion in different ways; and
* readers and non-readers believed that they had learnt something from the DC in different ways.

Now I have to interpret these findings. Because I am looking at teachers as teachers and also as individuals, who have their own circumstances, I felt the need to go back to you and ask for clarifications: why some read and some didn't; why some attended the DC and some didn't, etc. Your answers will help me understand your circumstances as individuals. What I admire about you (and I am saying so because this is exactly what I feel) is your honest and frank answers. For example, one teacher admitted a dislike of reading about teaching/learning writing and would rather read about listening. Another teacher said she wouldn't have attended the DC had it been optional. A third told me that, though she didn't read one single article (mentioning the reasons, of course), she wanted to attend the DC believing that sure there would be something to learn from it. A fourth teacher told me about her great interest in writing and in teaching writing and her desire to learn more about it; this had motivated her to read the articles and to attend. I am still in the process of interviewing teachers in relation to the DC. Some teachers have not yet been able to give me 10 minutes to ask my questions because of the exams. So the general picture is still incomplete. Once it is complete, I'll look at it and analayse it. Then I'll be able to tell you whether the Discussion Circles idea is practical or not in our context and to explain why. We also need to hold another DC at least in order for the finding to be valid and reliable.

The same procedure will be followed for the coming activities (presentations, workshops, and teachers' action research). Your cooperation and honest answers to my questions will help me make useful recommendations that will hopefully help to bring changes to the better in our context and perhaps in other similar contexts. Generally, commitment to a cause, to the profession, and to the ethics of caring and sharing motivate teachers and administrators in educational contexts to contribute and to help one another. My research is one step in this direction.

My role, therefore, is NOT an evaluator of your performance as individuals, but as investigator of our potential as a group and a community working in special circumstances and under certain constraints. In this research process, I am acting as a participant. This means I am learning from you and with you. I do all the tasks required of you in this research to have a real feel of the problems you are facing (though I am aware of most of them already). I asked the Director to give me teaching hours to do

my mini action research like you. Please don't look at me as one who is teaching or instructing you. In my project we are all equals in our pursuit of improvement and knowledge. I believe that once a teacher says he/she knows everything, he/she is no longer alive. Professional learning is long-life learning.

Finally, let me go back to where I started. If it were without the feedback the Director and the CAWRP coordinator gave me last Saturday, I would not be able to know about your need for this clarification sheet. I am not saying that it is wrong to tell the Director and others about what you feel regarding my research and my role, but it will help me and ultimately help you if you also told me about these feelings. I consider myself as one of you -- an insider, but regarding my role as a researcher, I need and have to reflect in my thesis the real picture. All this depends on your cooperation and understanding of what action research means.

One other very important thing that I want to draw your attention to relates to reporting the findings in my PhD thesis. Your names will not be mentioned. This is something taken for granted in such research. There is a big difference between research intended for development and betterment and one done for accountability. Though the word "evaluation" occurs in both types of research, the aim of evaluation is different . In the CAWPP we evaluate our performance and our activities in order for us to improve professionally as teachers and not to prepare the ground for anyone to reward or punish us. In my report of the findings (i.e. in my thesis), teachers will be referred to under code names, e.g. ET for "experienced teacher" and NT for "novice teacher". So please do not worry about this. I have read extensively about the ethics of research, and I am trying to observe these ethical codes to the best of my ability and knowledge.

Thank you again for your cooperation. Many thanks to the Director and the Project Coordinator for giving me the feedback that has given me insight into the need for writing such a clarification sheet. I hope it will achieve its aim. I look forward to seeing you all on Thursday, the 12th of December, for our next project activity. I hope you will find the coming Project activities both useful and enjoyable.

Sada A. Daoud

Appendix 5.1

Teacher Collaboration and Self-evaluation

AR Workshop Handout

Rola

Self-evaluation

Definition: "[Self-evaluation is] the ability of teachers to judge their own teaching honestly and to see clearly how much learning is taking place in the class" (Doff 1988: 278).

Doff makes these two points:

1. "Self-evaluation is not something that can be **taught**. It can be gradually developed by teachers themselves as they become more aware of their own teaching and of all the different factors that affect learning."

2. "In order to evaluate themselves, teachers must learn to observe themselves. Obviously, teachers cannot normally observe themselves directly, but there are ways in which they can observe themselves indirectly", e.g., "by careful planning before the lesson, followed by careful reflection after the lesson on what actually took place" (see also other ways in "Collaborative Action Research and Self-evaluation" below).

Teachers usually ask questions when they evaluate themselves, such as:

- What do I do as a teacher?
- What principles and beliefs inform my teaching?
- Why do I teach the way I do?
- What roles do learners play in my classes?
- Should I teach differently?

(Quoted from Richards and Lockhart 1994: 7)

Collaborative Action Research and Self-evaluation

Elliott (1991:56) argues for collaborative Action Research:

> I would argue that the widespread emergence of collaborative action research as a teacher-based form of curriculum evaluation and development is a creative response to the growth of technical-rational systems of hierarchical surveillance and control over teachers' professional practice.

Teacher collaboration is important for self-evaluation. How can teachers collaborate for the purpose of self-evaluation? Doff (1988: 279) suggests two ways:

- By observing other teachers' lessons and comparing them with what happens in their own classes.
- By inviting other teachers to observe their classes, and discussing the lesson with them afterwards.

Appendix 5.2

Choosing and Focusing Your Action Research Topic

Sada

We need to remember three principles when choosing a topic for action research, according to Hopkins (1993):

* that the topic should be interesting,
* that it should be relevant to school priorities, and
* that it should be viable.

The last principle is essential in our case in view of the many constrains that face us, particularly the time constraint. For this very reason, focusing and narrowing our chosen topic to a manageable size is basic for us to enjoy accomplishing the task we have committed ourselves to do.

The following activity (adapted from Edge 1992) will hopefully help us choose and focus our topics.

Activity

1. Divide according to the course you teach: Hum, Sci-Tec, Med, etc. If there are more than two teachers, divide into pairs.

2. Take a blank sheet and draw a circle in the middle. Write "APP component" in the middle of this circle. Brainstorm for areas that warrant investigation in relation to this component, and put these in smaller circles around the middle circle. Connect these new circles to the middle one with arrows (e.g., materials, testing, methodology, constrains, etc.)

3. Ask yourself/selves two questions: (a) " In which area does my/our interest lie as a researcher(s)?" and (b) "which area is more relevant to our needs (your needs and your students')?"

4. Take this area and put it in a new circle in the middle of a new page, and brainstorm again for topics and sub topics, etc. that relate to this particular area. For example, if you select "methodology" as the area that interests you, sub-topics could be:

- "Feedback", which can be divided further into
  - student feedback (sub topics: written, oral)

- teacher feedback (sub topics: the affective dimension of teacher written/oral feedback)
- Teacher role/student role in the APP session
- First draft and second draft: What should I/we focus on?
- Students' revision strategies (sub: strong/weak students' strategies)
- Raising students awareness of English rhetoric: Two strategies
- Peer editing or teacher editing? Which is more effective?
- Plagiarism: Two remedies
- Collaborative writing of APPs: Comparing students' views with teachers' views
- Collaborative writing: grouping students/pairing students
- Collaborative writing: Effect on text cohesion
- Collaborative writing: Student motivation
- Collaborative writing: Does it decrease my/our correction load?
- Collaborative writing and collaborative presentations: How does one influence the other?
- Collaborative writing: Strategies for avoiding evaluation problems

Appendix 5.3

Testing Collaborative Writing

From: SD
To: CAWRP Participants and Other Interested Centre Tutors
Subject: Testing Collaborative Writing of APPs
Date: 21 December 1996

In view of the postponement of the Action Research Workshop (originally scheduled for 26 December 1996), I feel the need to remind you of a few things at this stage of the course and also of the CAWRP. These are:

1. Team/collaborative writing of APPS, particularly in medical courses, was recommended (Daoud 1995) in view of the findings that the majority of the Centre teachers of writing were overloaded with correction of individual projects and that the majority of students were spoonfed. The recommendation, therefore, aimed at helping both teachers and students but in different ways.

2. An initial investigation of the viability of the above recommendation was carried out during the first phase of the CAWRP. Findings suggested that the majority of students in the medical course were in principle with the idea of collaborative writing. Teachers, however, were divided on the issue. Some supported the idea and others opposed it. But all the teachers who responded to a baseline questionnaire agreed that the recommendation of collaborative writing of APPs should be tried and evaluated in order to confirm or reject its value objectively.

Therefore, teachers are called upon to bring up the idea of collaborative project writing with their students in all courses indicating that it is an optional alternative to individual projects in the case of students who share the same specialization. Describing it as an "optional alternative" implies two basic principles that all of us, teachers of APP, should bear in mind. These are:

1. We should not in any way force our students to team write but try to encourage them to do so by raising their awareness of the importance of collaboration between people of the same profession. We, teachers and students, will not be able to judge the practicality of this recommendation unless we try it in a disciplined manner. In other words, there is a need to prove our intuitive feeling by research.

2. # 1 above implies that our evaluation of the practicality and workability of collaborative writing and its relevant activities (e.g. collaborative presentations) needs to be on-going. This means collecting classroom data at different stages (3 at least) of the writing process.

For our findings to be valid and reliable, we need to research whatever aspect we want to focus on in collaboration. Since the whole concept of collaborative research and writing is new to us and to our students, and in view of the constraints facing us (particularly those of place and time), it might be better to work in pairs as a start. Action research means we need to improvise as we go along depending on the research findings, but we should not lose focus. Our findings need to be periodically reported to all the Centre staff. This last point has been strongly endorsed by the Centre Director in an interview with her lately.

Appendix 6.1

Reem and Sada's Research Progress Report

Research Topic: Student Written Feedback on Their Writing
Course: Science and Technology
Date: 6 February 1997

In this progress report, we will try to cover the following:

A. Initial Reflection: why "Student Written Feedback on Their Writing?"
B. Planning: Research Methodology and Design
C. Action: Implementation of the Strategy and Initial Response
D. Findings of the First Cycle
E. Reflection: Evaluation of the Findings and decisions for Future Action

We appreciate our colleagues' critical evaluation of this report.

A. Initial Reflection: Why "Student Written Feedback"?

We agreed to investigate this topic following our reflection on two problems that face us as teachers of writing, particularly APP writing:

1. Problem one relates to us: Being inexperienced in teaching Science and Technology students, we feel we have difficulty understanding some specialist concepts in student writing, and in some cases, we need clarification from students. We think that student written feedback can help us in this regard.

2. Problem two relates to our students: We believe that students face many problems in the writing process. Some of these problems might relate to our comments and evaluation of their writing. Unless students report on these problems the moment they face them, many of them will persist. We believe that student written feedback, given in the process of writing, can provide us with clues to deal with students' problems as they arise and on the individual level.

We also believe that student written feedback is a writing exercise in its own right. It trains students to write with a particular audience in mind (the teacher).

B. Planning: Research Methodology and Design

We agreed to use action research methodology: Reflection, planning, observation, evaluation, reflection, and so on to find answers to three questions:

1. How many students respond to the idea of giving written feedback?
2. What do students focus on in their notes and comments?
3. What do students and teachers think of this strategy (its advantages and disadvantages)?

We decided to use students' comments, our Research Records (a record of our reflections, observation, and evaluation), and a questionnaire at the end of the second Cycle to collect data. Using different techniques gives more validity and reliability to our findings (McNiff 1988; Hopkins 1993). We decided to discuss our research frequently informally when we meet in the staff room in breaks and formally at agreed on times weekly or biweekly, depending on need. We also agreed to use the telephone for communication.

Since the course is short (10 teaching weeks), we decided to do two cycles of action research. The first covers the first four weeks of the course and the second the next four weeks of the course. We also decided to exchange our Research Records and write comments to each other.

C. Action: Implementation of the Strategy and Initial Response

We introduced the strategy of student written feedback in week two of the course. We encouraged students to use it and explained what we thought its benefits would be to them and us. Initially, student general response to the idea was neutral. In one of classes a student mentioned finding difficulty in expressing himself in writing in English. We discussed this reaction in one of our meetings and decided to give students the alternative of writing their notes and comments in Arabic only in case they felt they were unable to express themselves in English. We were keen on solving writing problems at the right time rather than in writing as an exercise. As our students started writing in week three, we started our observation and recorded our findings in our Research Records. We held two meetings to discuss our findings and the problems that arose in the research process. We also exchanged our Research Records to have deeper insight into what each one of us was doing.

D. Findings of the First Research Cycle

The Table below presents our findings up to the end of week 4 of the course. All respondents used English for writing their feedback comments.

Table: Student Written Feedback: Response and Focus in the First Four Weeks

	Class 1 (18 students)	Class 2 (19 students)
No of respondents	5 (27.77 %)	9 (47.36%)
Focus of Feedback	Varied (all on APP) - content - conventions - NVDs - explanations of terms	Varied (general English) - Mostly surface errors - non-specific comments

E. Reflection: Evaluation of the Findings and Decisions for Future Action

Reflecting on these findings, we noticed that students who responded were mainly average-to-good students. None of our weak students gave us written feedback. Students who handed in written APP work in class 1 numbered 12. They did so in week 4, and writing was carried out at home. The number was higher in class 2, but writing was done once in the class (17 Ss) and once at home (11 Ss). The main problem that faced our research was differences in the nature of the writing task and place of writing. One teacher was working on the APP only (i.e., specialised text) and the other on general English writing tasks. We also failed to recognise the importance of the place of writing as a variable that might affect our findings.

These two things certainly affect the validity and reliability of our research at this stage. We became aware of this only at the end of the first cycle and decided, therefore, to unify the task and place variables in the second phase of our research. The problems we encountered in the first phase will be taken into account in interpreting our findings.

As can be seen from the Table, only five students responded in class 1, while 9 students responded in class 2. Also the focus of feedback in class 1 was mainly related to content and writing conventions (typical problems in APP writing), while in class 2 the focus of feedback was unfocused, and where it was focused it was mainly concerned with surface errors (e.g., vocabulary and spelling).

We interpreted our findings mainly in view of the discrepancy in the writing task. This has certainly affected the rate of response as well as its focus. In APP writing, students' weak areas seem to be in applying academic writing conventions and in worrying about their audience (the teacher, apparently) understanding of their specialist terms. In general English exercises, student writers care more about correctness (i.e., surface errors).

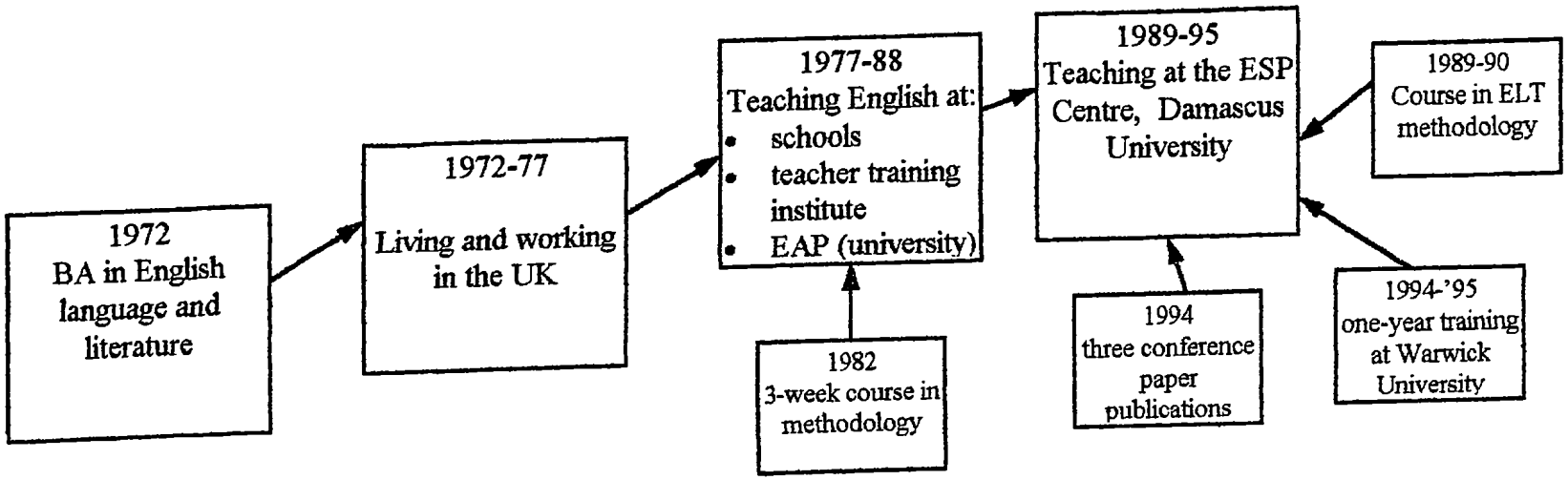
In spite of this, we both believe that the strategy was helpful to us to understand our students' problems in relation to the task each one of us focused on. Students' written feedback has helped us to deal with writing problems orally in the class or by suggesting solutions in writing. As for students' response, it was low at this stage, perhaps because of lack of awareness of the importance of this strategy to both students and teachers. We thought that we should encourage more student involvement in the next stage, particularly in the case of weak students. Distributing one sample of students' comments and discussing it with the whole class might raise awareness (see Appendix for a sample of students' comments).

We are now collecting data for the next stage. We are hoping that our findings will be more valid and reliable since we have decided to unify the writing task and the place of writing. We are watching for student response also.

We did not have time to read the literature and compare our results with those of other studies done in this area. We hope to find time in the second phase of our research.

Appendix 8.1

The Researcher's Learning Journey prior to the PhD Study



Appendix 8.2: A Visual Representation of the CAWRP Learning Journey